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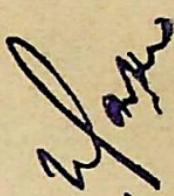


SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH
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**SRI KRISHNA
PASTORAL AND KING-MAKER**

Fifth Edition
5—XXII—1944
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PRINTED AT THE BANGALORE PRESS, MYSORE ROAD
BANGALORE CITY

To
His Serene Holiness
THE SWAMI BRAHMANANDAJI
President of the Ramakrishna Mission

This little Book is dedicated by
His Devoted Servant
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

PREFACE

THE first of the two lectures by Swami Ramakrishnanandaji was delivered before the Triplicane Literary Society at Madras on Sri Jayanti Day in 1898. The eminent lawyer, Yogi Parthasarathi Iyengar, presided on the occasion and the audience consisted of all the most learned gentlemen of Triplicane. The deep impression made upon them by the Swami's eloquent words led to the publication of the lecture by some of his earnest disciples.

The second lecture was read before the members of the Egmore Reading Room the following year, also on the anniversary of Sri Krishna's birth, and like its predecessor appeared in print. The editions of both the pamphlets were exhausted some time ago and now in response to frequent demands for them, they have been united in a single volume and are once more made available to the public.

The difficulty of giving a clear idea of any portion of the full and varied life of the great Incarnation, Lord Sri Krishna, can only be known to those who are familiar with the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and many other books from which the facts of that life must be gathered. That the Swami should have been able in the small compass of two short lectures to reproduce so faithfully the glowing and replete narratives of the inspired works of Parasara and Vyasa, with their wealth of descriptive detail, shows how thoroughly he is a master of his subject. There are, indeed, few writings which present so vivid a picture of the pastoral life and public career of the Lord Sri Krishna in so concise a form and for this reason

the present volume must always possess a value of its own. We, therefore, feel it again a happy privilege to offer this new edition of the combined lectures to the public, believing that in so doing we are making "one of the best gifts which a man can make to his brother man".

Madras
24th April 1909 }

A Student

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

IN response to requests from friends we have great pleasure in issuing a fresh edition of this brochure. It is no small measure of satisfaction to us that this demand is an unmistakable indication of the yearning for the living words of a true devotee who had the rare privilege of sitting at the holy feet of one of the greatest Avatara-purushas of the age—Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna.

9th February 1920

Publishers

THE PASTORAL SRI KRISHNA

ALTHOUGH joy always gives way to pain, and pain, in its turn, is followed by pleasure here, still when a man is under the influence of one or the other, he is led away to believe that his days of prosperity and happiness, or of anguish and misery, will have no end. This is the reason why a man of the world is enabled to enjoy to his heart's content the little portion of pleasure which Nature doles out to him, with her miserly hand, in this sea of troubles ; this is the reason why life has become so dear to him ; this is the reason why the contact-born pleasures, although they are transient and ephemeral, mirage-like and uncertain, and therefore, properly considered, should be unattractive, nay, repulsive, still have so much charm for the whole human race ; and this also is the reason why a man in anguish and agony becomes so restless and hopeless, deeming there will be no end of his misery. It is only given to a philosopher to meet calmly these two opposite powers which rule and guide the destiny of man. The ordinary man wakes to see the real state of affairs only at the time of transition, that is, when his day of prosperity and bliss is giving way to the night of misery, and *vice versa* ; at such a period of anxiety as to his future lot, the idea of the ephemerality of the world brings in him a momentary desire to renounce it,—momentary, because this neutral period does not last long.

A similar transition, sudden and unexpected, fell upon the lot of a newly-married couple, who were simple and beautiful, yet, noble and majestic to look at, soft and delicate, yet determined and resolute. It came to

them while they were being driven homeward in a royal carriage, richly decorated with all precious gems and ornaments, followed by a large retinue of people wearing gaudy *gala* dresses, and carrying or leading the marriage dowries in the shape of vast masses of gold and silver, pearls and diamonds, splendid chariots, gold-caparisoned horses and elephants. Devaki, the wife, and Vasudeva, the husband, formed this couple, the central figures in the procession. The charioteer was no less an attractive figure than these two, for not only was he the most gorgeously dressed of all in the company, but a golden diadem, set with all sorts of precious stones, adorning his head, as well as his commanding look, unmistakably pointed him out to be the ruler of the land, although he was on the driver's seat. Yes, he was no less than Kamsa himself, the most absolute and tyrannical monarch of the period, the bare mention of whose name was sufficient to send a thrill through the hearts of all good and peace-loving people. The newly-married girl, Devaki, was his own sister, and he loved the sister with more than a brother's love, and that is the reason why, on that day, when he was sending her to her husband's house, he wanted to drive the carriage himself as a token of his fraternal love.

Devaki and Vasudeva were really very happy, and they thought themselves very fortunate in having the dreaded monarch of the surrounding territories, as their driver. A soft breeze, accompanied with the fragrance of flowers, was soothing them ; birds were singing merrily on the branches of the trees ; the rising sun was sending forth his balmy rays, which served to thaw away gently the sloth which cold night had made to settle upon the joints and limbs of all living beings. Everything was pleasant all around.

Suddenly the face of Nature changed. The birds stopped singing ; the sun was obscured by a cloud ; the soft breeze became a gale carrying dust and dirt along with it and throwing them right upon the face of the procession ; rooks began to caw harshly ; and similar other omens were not wanting to augur an imminent danger. An unaccountable fear suddenly gloomed the minds of all in the procession, which, just a few seconds before, had been the merriest concourse of all light-hearted individuals. At such a time, an unseen voice was heard from above which was only intended for the royal driver, and which ran thus : " O thou foolish one, whom art thou driving so merrily ? Wottest thou not that the eighth issue of her womb shall be the cause of thy death ? " At this the terrible Kamsa sprang up from his seat, drew his sword, and was about to kill his sister on the spot, had not Vasudeva interposed, falling upon his feet, on behalf of his newly-married wife, reminding him that not Devaki, but her eighth child would be the cause of his death. So he requested Kamsa, most humbly, to spare her life, she being fully innocent of the future regicide, and promised, since he had fear from her issues, that each and every one of them would be given over to him, and he might do whatever he liked with them. Kamsa felt the force of the reason and agreed to the proposal of Vasudeva, and accordingly, instead of killing her or driving her to her husband's house, he returned to his palace. The dejected and weeping couple, heading the mournful procession, gradually proceeded to Gokula, where Vasudeva had his house, and there they got down. Vasudeva's friend, Nanda, the shepherd king, came to see him and his new bride, in great joy, but when he saw them weeping, and heard about the cause, his joy turned into sorrow. However

he began to console his friend by advising him to abide by the will of God. Vasudeva was wise, and so he took his friend's counsel and completely surrendered himself to divine dispensation.

Besides his newly-married bride Devaki, Vasudeva had another good wife, named Rohini and with these two loving and dutiful wives he somehow managed to live in as much peace and comfort of mind as he could command in such an unlucky and appalling circumstance. In course of time, the first male child was born to Devaki ; and Vasudeva, true to his word, sent the news to Kamsa, and immediately it was carried off by the servants of the demon to him, who instantly killed it with his own hand. Six children were thus killed by the cruel king, who foolishly wanted to avert the course of fate. In the case of the seventh child, somehow or other the womb appeared to be fruitless, although it was really transferred, through divine agency, from Devaki to Rohini who in due course of time, brought forth a child that, on account of its transference from one womb to another came to be known by the name of Sankarshana.

The love of a mother towards her child is natural and intense to a degree that makes her regard her own life as nothing when the life of her child is in danger. We can, therefore, slightly imagine the extreme torture and violent agony that Devaki had to undergo, when each and every one of her six children was carried away and put to death before her very eyes, as it were, by her monstrous, demon-like and tiger-hearted brother.

Now when the time for the birth of her eighth child was approaching, Kamsa ordered Vasudeva and Devaki to be cast into his prison, and accordingly both of them were thrown into the same dungeon, bound with the same chain. Both the wife and the husband knew not what

to do. Every minute of their life they called upon their only hope, their only Deliverer, God, the solace of the unhappy. But God proved to be as heartless, inert, and silent to them, as the stone walls of their dungeon. In the agony of desperation they therefore naturally concluded that even the last hope of the miserable, which lay in asking for refuge at the lotus feet of the all-merciful Providence, had been denied to them ; that the accumulated evil actions of their past lives had baffled even the all-powerful grace of God to send them only a ray of comfort ; and that they would have to bear the burden of their unbearable lives even to the last. Oh! what were they to do ? No solace knew that unhappy couple, whose hearts were as pure as snow ; who, even in that extreme state, in that gloomy dungeon of the monster, never blamed God nor disbelieved in Him, but blamed the actions of their own past lives. Restless and hopeless were they indeed !

But however much the clouds may thicken and hide the sun from our view for days and days together, still none of them shall ever be able to take away the sun for ever from us, although in such gloomy days we may become very restless, fear another deluge, or imagine a dissolution of the entire creation. Even in the gloom of clouds, there are flashes of lightning. Even in the utter darkness of hopelessness there are occasional glimmerings of hope, which keep the miserable man alive by making him hope against hope. And in this case, as the innate piety and devotion of the distressed couple never forsook them, they found a peculiar kind of rest in God even in that restlessness of anguish. Ardent prayers, proceeding from the very bottom of their souls, incessantly flowed out of their hearts ; and the Almighty Lord of the Universe, in His own mysterious way, was infilling their

souls with infinite power of endurance which kept the fragile vessels of their delicate frames steady and safe in that gloomy and stormy sea of life.

Even the all-enduring mother Earth could not bare the tyranny, oppression and lawlessness of Kamsa, which her innocent children were sorely troubled with, and our Puranas go on to say, that she actually wept before the Lord and made her complaints known before His divine Majesty in so telling and appealing a manner, that the all-merciful Father of the Universe thought it fit that He should not make any more delay in redressing the grievances of those who solely depended upon Him for their support. He thought that the time was ripe when He should come down to take His birth in the womb of Devaki, as her eighth child who, as had been foretold, was to kill the tyrant Kamsa and thus save the earth from all her troubles.

Kamsa, too, was not careless in providing against the impending danger which was to come about very soon, as the time of the birth of the eighth issue of Devaki was fast approaching. All the world was anxiously expecting the birth of the child, both the good as well as the wicked, the former wanting to relieve themselves from the tyranny of the latter, and the latter wanting to relieve themselves from the fearful child by putting Him to death and thus making an end of Him. The Satanic Kamsa left no stone unturned to get the earliest notice of the birth of his dreaded enemy; innumerable watchful and faithful servants were employed to keep strict watch upon the innocent and distressed couple all day and night.

As the time of her giving birth to the Saviour of the earth was drawing near, Devaki, as also her consort, Vasudeva, were sorely troubled in their hearts. Their natural affection for the child in the womb blinded them

to the fact that, instead of being destroyed, it was destined to destroy the tyrant and his party. Although occasional remembrances of the divine promise served to dispel much of their gloom, and thus soothe and encourage them at times, still, on the whole, their lives were extremely miserable, especially as Kamsa was unrelentingly cruel and harsh to them at this time.

The restlessness of Kamsa's mind also reached its acme ; every minute he was expecting the birth of the child ; sometimes through fear he would suspect his most faithful servants, and imagine that they might take pity on the child and hide its birth from his knowledge. So he would himself come into the prison, to see whether everything was all right, would frown at and revile the terrified and shivering couple, exhort his people to be more vigilant than ever, and promise a great reward to the man who would first show the child to him. He could not sleep in the night. The slightest noise would awake him, making him think that one of his servants was bringing the new-born baby to him. He would start up from his bed, run towards the door or look through his windows towards the prison to see if there was any stir or commotion. He began to see visions of the child everywhere, coming with mace and discus to kill him. To divert his mind he would look towards his favourite trees, laden with fruits or flowers, and out of them his dreaded enemy would step forth with mace and discus. Thence he would cast his eyes to the beautiful moon to find some comfort there, but the cruel moon, instead of giving him any solace, would open her heart to reveal to him the very same man with the mace and discus, and pained at the sight, he would turn his eyes to other objects of Nature, each and every one of which, as if conspiring against him, would bring forth

nothing but that dreaded form. Then he would shut his eyes, thus wanting to free himself from the detestable sight; but out of that darkness would come rushing forth his enemy with the same weapons to kill him, and then he would not know whether to open or close his eyes. He was almost mad, and even his most favourite queens shuddered to approach him, as he used to be mad with rage with no cause whatsoever. Most deplorable indeed was his condition at this time. In his food, in his drink, he would see and shudder at the figure of his much-dreaded enemy, and extreme fear thus served to make his mind concentrated on the one object of his fear, which imperceptibly transformed his inner man into that object.

On the other hand, the sorrowful and helpless couple lost all hope of saving their child from the hands of the watchful guards, who were every minute enquiring of the husband how it was faring with Devaki, who was then under labour. It was a rainy and stormy midnight. The wind was howling furiously, and incessant rollings of thunder and flashes of lightning made the hearts of the poor couple and the watchful guards shudder. For weeks together these guards had not been allowed to enjoy good sleep, and under the influence of liquor, which they had freely used on that night to keep their spirits up, and the soothing effect of a cool and strong breeze, they all fell fast asleep, forgetful of their charge.

Devaki was about to usher into the world its Saviour, and she, along with her husband, bewailed her lot and beat her breast and forehead saying, "O darling, be not born of me to be smashed to death by the wretch. O God, what a hard lot we have ! Why do you not come to help us when we are going to be drowned in this shoreless ocean of misery ? Are we not your servants ? Prop

of the poor and helpless ! Come, come to our rescue. Delay no more ; it is too much for us : we cannot bear any more." And with this, both the wife and the husband fell into a swoon. In the gloom of that unconsciousness, suddenly a light flashed, and before that light those thick, dark layers of the clouds of misery, the accumulated effect of several past years, vanished all at once, and the sun of gladness and peace, in the shape of a smiling and beautiful youth of sixteen, holding mace and discus, conch-shell and lotus in his four hands, rose above the horizon of their mental firmament, shedding benign and nectarean lustre over their souls, healing all their mental wounds, and cheering and exhilarating them with his sweet smile. As the hungry emaciated Esquimaux, after living in his snow house for weeks and weeks together and spending nearly all the food gathered there before he entered it with his family to pass away the longest night on earth, when that night is almost spent and the equally longest day is approaching, leaps up with joy and springs out of his den, trap in hand, to hail the gladdening light of the Aurora Borealis ; so the hearts of Devaki and Vasudeva leaped with joy at seeing the enchanting face of the smiling and sweet-looking lad that came running towards them, and thus charmingly accosted them :—" Father and mother, weep no more. I have come at last to your rescue and to the rescue of all the good. Earth shall have to complain no more. The days of the wicked have been numbered. The wretched Kamsa is not to hold his sceptre long. He has no power to kill me. I am too subtle and too strong for him. Open your eyes and see me as your child. Carry me, father, to the house of your friend Nanda in Gokula. His wife, Yasoda, has given birth to a daughter just now. Exchange me for that daughter.

Bring her back to this dungeon leaving me on the lap of Yasoda, who will be sleeping at the time. Nothing shall bar your path." With this, the soul-solacing charmer vanished. The gloom again set in; but their hearts were lighter and they opened their eyes to see the most charming baby ever a parent was blessed with. They forgot their wretched condition for a while, looking at the smiling baby playing with its tiny limbs. The mother kissed the sweet face and forgot her danger. Then they awoke to realize the real state of affairs and both the husband and the wife shuddered. The sweet instructions of the fascinating lad in the vision then flashed into their minds. Vasudeva clasped the child at once in his bosom to start for Gokula, but he found that his legs were fettered, along with those of his wife, by the same chain. He did not know what to do. In his madness, he gave a jerk, and his legs were released ! He sprang upon his feet and ran towards the door of his dungeon. O ! the massive, iron-barred doors were locked with three-fold locks; but the sentinels were all asleep, and therefore fearlessly he gave a push forward and the gates were unlocked and flew open of their own accord, making a grating sound which chilled the heart of the father lest the sound might wake the sleeping sentinels. He ran forward like a mad man; but alas ! there was another gate equally massive and similarly locked, with sentinels snoring beside it. His first experience had made him bold and hopeful ; so he gave this too a push, and of its own accord it flew open. He ran through it. Five more equally strong, bolted and locked doors he similarly passed, and the sleeping sentinels knew nothing of it. He was now a free man. God's sky was over his head. The free breeze was blowing over him to take away the fusty smell of the dungeon from off his person. It

was raining heavily. Pitch dark clouds enhanced the darkness of the night. He wrapped the baby in a portion of his own dirty cloth to save it from being drenched completely in the rain. But what course was he to take to reach his destination ? It was darkness all around. Not a single thing was visible. He was at a stand-still. Suddenly the lightning flashed, and he was able to make out something about his way. So he went on with difficulty, finding out his path with the help of the occasional flashes of lightning. Although it was raining in torrents he found that, somehow or other, he and his child were not drenched in anyway. He thanked his God for this.

At last he came near the brink of the river Yamuna, which heaved and flowed so rapidly with innumerable eddies and whirlpools, that it dried up the blood in his heart to imagine fording the river at such an hour of the night and in such weather, for no ferry-boat was available at the time. He did not know what to do and was almost hopeless. Just then a jackal was seen to get into the river, and it began to walk over the water to go to the other side. Vasudeva took the creature to be a Godsend, and soon followed it. The water did not reach his knees. But, alas ! through his carelessness the child dropped into the river ! He began to search for it in vain, the rapid current had carried it away ! " Ah God ! why do you play such pranks with me, wretched as I am ! O where am I to find my child ? " Thus saying he began to beat his breast and forehead in utter agony of despair ; and lo ! the child was floating right under his nose ! He took it up, clasped it firmly in his bosom, kissed it again and again, and followed the path pointed out by the jackal. At last he reached the other side. He thanked God and ran towards Gokula, reached there,

and then it was not very difficult for him to find out the house of his friend Nanda, the shepherd king.

To his astonishment he found the door of the house open, as if ready to receive him. He at once entered into the compound. The house had been frequented by him before, so he could easily search out the room of Yasoda, whom he saw sleeping there along with her maids, and playing on her lap, was the new-born baby about whose birth, as it were, she and all in the room were fully unconscious. A moment only was needed for him to place his own child upon the lap of Yasoda, and take her child up and clasp it in his bosom instead, although it rent his heart to do so. But what could he do ? There was no alternative. He rushed with her (it was a female child) into the street ; from there ran to the Yamuna, crossed it and hurried to the prison of Kamsa. The gates which had been left open by him were still open and the sentinels were still sleeping beside them. Without any delay he passed through the seven gates and as soon as he reached the side of his anxiously waiting and weeping consort, and presented her with the stolen child of another the gates shut, bolted and locked of their own accord, just as they had been before. Oh how beautiful the child looked ! As amidst the gloomiest clouds, the merriest lightnings play at hide-and-seek, beautifying the whole nature with their glory as they now and then peep out of the clouds, unmindful of the terrible rollings of the thunders, the roar of the hurricane and the thick piercing showers of heavy rains, accompanied with pelting hailstones that devastate the fated earth, so the tiny baby smiled and played and laughed on the laps of the weeping parents, in whose hearts the hail-storm of misery was making havoc, unmindful of their wretched and hopeless condition and her own ill-fate,

as she was destined to be smashed to death half an hour later.

Morning approached and the guards of Kamsa suddenly woke up from their deep sleep ; they were terribly afraid for their undutifulness, but when each one saw that all of them had committed the same guilt and he was not the only offender, they regained the colour in their countenance and rushed to look into the prison. They saw the child, and although the parents would not allow them to have it, they snatched it away from them and went directly up to their master, and offered it to him.

When Kamsa saw that it was a female child, he came directly to the prison to inquire whether any stratagem had been played by the parents to deceive him, to save the promised male child. After strict inquiry, he could not get the least scent of the actual fact that had taken place. So when Vasudeva imploringly asked him not to kill a female child, for it could not do him the harm which he might only expect from a male issue, he roughly answered him, " You wretch, do you take me to be a fool that you want to play tricks upon me ? This enemy of mine can assume all forms, and do you think I am going to save him because he has taken up the garb of a female ? " So saying he went away with his guards to put the baby to death which, all this while had been smiling, playing, nay, even sometimes laughing in a weird manner that made the heart of the monster tremble. There was the stone before him. He firmly caught the legs of the tiny baby, which was as merry as merry could be, lifted it up in the air, and down he wanted to smash it upon the stone ; but lo ! it slipped out from his firm demoniac grip, laughing the merriest laugh a baby had ever laughed, and assuming in the air a bigger form with eight hands, looked tauntingly down upon Kamsa, laughing still the

more. "Wretch," cried the strange girl, "Dost thou think to avert the will of the Almighty? Lo! thy destroyer is flourishing in Gokula in the house of Nanda." So saying she vanished, and Kamsa trembled. For some time he remained like one stupefied, and then his own Satanic nature raged in full fury, and he sent spies at once to Gokula to see whether Nanda had got a child or not. In his seeming goodness, the result of intense fear, he ordered his guards to keep his sister and brother-in-law in simple imprisonment, take off their chains, and supply them with their necessary wants, thinking it to be useless to torment them anymore, as the end for which they had had to undergo such inhuman treatment from him, had been baffled by God. The birth of the Saviour dispelled three-fourths of His parent's troubles, who now hoped that their child might still be saved to release them from bondage at some time in the near future. Their hearts were lighter, and they thanked the Lord for it.

Early in the morning all at Gokula came to know that a beautiful prince had been born the previous night to Nanda, their beloved king, and their simple hearts were filled with unbounded joy. They hurried to see their king and congratulate him on this joyful occasion carrying on their shoulders their modest presents of curd, butter and condensed milk. As soon as they saw Nanda, these simple-hearted shepherds began to dance in joy in the courtyard of his house, unmindful of breaking the pots containing their presents and thus wasting them, some of which now actually flowed out of not a few broken pots which they had carelessly dropped down on the floor in their ecstasy. The contents of these pots whitened and made the compound slippery and muddy. Who can describe the incessant laughs from all around occasioned by the sudden fall of a newcomer laden with

pots filled with the aforementioned presents, in their merriment breaking still other pots on their heads or shoulders and spilling the contents on the floor making it more muddy and slippery? Some rushed towards him, on the pretence of giving him a helping hand, and smeared his whole body and face with the mixture of curd, butter and mud; and he too was not a man to remain silent and indifferent to all this, and in his turn he smeared the bodies of the whole company with the same mixture. So the merry struggle in besmearing one another now became universal. Some ran into the kitchen, begged a large quantity of pasted turmeric, intended for colouring and seasoning the curries, made it liquid by mixing it with some curd, rushed into the compound, and throwing it upon the whole congregation, made them all look yellow. The inventors of this mixture were highly praised for their skill and ingenuity by those simple-minded rustics. All of them now began to dance; some brought tambourines, cymbals, lyres and flutes, and began to play upon them, and all of them danced and sang in chorus the praises of God: thus what began in pure merriment, ended in solemn rapture. When they felt tired, all of them went into the neighbouring, swift-flowing Yamuna with its clearest and most limpid water, bathed and washed off all their dirt there, and returned to their simple king's modest palace, where a simple, but hearty and substantial repast was awaiting them. Thus ended the rustic festival of Nanda and his simple subjects, which even up to this date, is observed by almost all the Hindus of India.

When Kamsa heard, through his spies, that a male child was born to Nanda, he sent a female demon to poison the child. She assumed the form of a very fair young lady, poisoned the nipples of her breast, and went

to Gokula. People took her to be a lady of a high and wealthy family ; and when she directly went into the inner compartments of Nanda's palace, no one resisted her. She went straight up to where Yasoda was sitting with the sweet-looking baby on her lap, and congratulated her in having such a beautiful child, whom she longed to take upon her lap only once, if the good mother would kindly permit her, so that she might imprint a kiss upon the sweet face of the fairest child she had ever seen. The simple mother was too good to offer any resistance to such a loving request, and the next moment the child was on the lap of the demoness who, not only kissed it several times, but thrust the nipple of her breast into its mouth in order to suckle it, as she averred. Although she could impose upon the simple-minded shepherd girl, she could not hide her evil intention from the view of the all-knowing God of the Universe, Who in the form of a baby began, as soon as the nipple was thrust into his mouth, to suck it so much, that at last he began to suck the very life out of her ; and in the meanwhile, she had carried the baby away from the house, within the twinkling of an eye, and Yasoda could not suspect any danger from her. The wicked demoness seeing herself thus outwitted, and in fear of losing her life, assumed her real form, which was most ugly and terrible to look at, as big as a palmyra tree. But all her powers were too small to save herself from being sucked out of life by the seeming baby. She fell down dead on the roadside of Gokula, uttering a loud cry, terrifying all the people there by the cry, as well as by her hideous and gigantic figure. The name of the demoness was Putana. The baby in the meanwhile was playing on the carcass of the hideous monstress. In search of her child, Yasoda ran out of the house like one mad. She was

running towards the terrible monstress, when a shepherd girl, with the baby in her bosom, came hurrying towards her and gave the child to the mother, narrating all about the wonderful incident, how she had found her baby laughing and playing upon the breast of the dead-demoness ! Whoever heard this, wondered what kind of a baby this must be. The advent of the demoness in their peaceful retreat created a great anxiety in the minds of all the people there. They no longer doubted that she must have been sent by the wicked king Kamsa, to kill Nanda's child, as by this time every one cursed him inwardly for destroying his own sister's children. They, therefore, naturally concluded that the arch-demon had taken a fancy to put their innocent king's child also to death, he being a bosom friend to Vasudeva. Henceforth the shepherds of Gokula determined to be particularly careful in admitting any stranger in their peaceful town ; little deeming that the wicked demons were too wily, subtle and cunning for them.

Once the baby was placed under a cart laden with pots filled with curd and other things. A demon imperceptibly settled upon the cart and broke it in no time, intending to crush the child to death, but, not a single plank, pot or anything fell upon it, and the huge demon lay dead on the spot being kicked to death instead by the seeming baby. Once the mother, Yasoda, was caressing and fondling her pretty little child by clasping it on her bosom, but suddenly it grew so very heavy that she could not keep it there, and was forced to place it on the bare floor of the compound. A demon, finding this opportunity, wanted to carry it high up in the air, then dash it against a rock and thus make an end of its life. Accordingly, in the form of a whirlwind, he swooped upon it and wanted to lift it up. He

succeeded in doing so for a while by firmly clasping it to his bosom, but no sooner did he rise up a little higher in the air than it became so heavy that the demon fell down upon the ground under its weight, and roaring like thunder, was crushed to death in the centre of the town. People rushed towards the spot where he fell, and were astonished to find that the new-born child of their king was crawling with its smiling face upon the huge carcass of a hideous monster ! They at once took it up and ran to give it to its weeping mother, who was madly running hither and thither to find her child. Their gladness knew no bounds when the shepherds restored the child to her, and no woman could be so grateful to her benefactors, as she was, on the occasion, to those kind friends.

Several such incidents are mentioned in the Puranas as having taken place in the early life of our hero, who successfully put the demoniac authors of them all to death, and who began to increase in stature and strength, beauty and majesty rapidly. Some people like to look upon these demons as mere disastrous accidents which the baby of Yasoda, somehow or other, escaped ; and these getting their colour from the hands of the poets, have been manufactured into demon stories. Modern science has taught such critics that the universe is made up of eighty elements which have certain fixed characteristics of their own. Those characteristics are always the same under the same circumstances, and go by the name of Natural laws. Atheists, Sceptics and Agnostics, therefore, find no necessity of admitting a God as the Creator of the universe, since those eighty elements and the laws which they obey are sufficient to explain all phenomena. They have reduced the whole universe and its workings to a combination of dull, dead and inert matter and material forces. No intelligent power is

behind all these, to order and regulate them. The aimless, thoughtless stream of creation is eternally flowing between its two banks of cause and effect, upon the bed of space and time, coming from and going to the unknown and unknowable ; and the self-consciousness and intelligence of man, what are they ? They are merely the effects of the combinations of certain elements in certain proportions. Death dissolves the body, as well as the self. However rational these conclusions may appear, which I leave to my audience to refute, there can be no doubt that they are extremely uninteresting, dull, prosaic and undesirable. The universe, in that case, is nothing more than an automatic machine, a soul-less active organism. But as we cannot imagine the existence of an automatic machine unless it has been previously arranged or set in order by an intelligent being, nor of a soul-less body having life in it, similarly it is impossible for us to imagine the existence of such a world. As in a living being life depends for its existence upon the soul, that is, with the entrance or exit of the soul in the organism, life also will have to enter into or go away from it, similarly the cosmic life must depend for its existence upon a soul behind, but for which no life can exist. This is our honest conviction ; and this was also the conviction in those old and hoary Pauranic days, when people were honest believers in a universal Soul, whom they called God. This God used to peep out to them through all glorious phenomena, through all beautiful and charming manifestations of Nature. Hence the sun, the moon, the lightning and thunder, the fire, the sublime mountains like the Himalayas, the wide and long winding rivers with pure and limpid water, like the Ganges, the gigantic trees which lift up their innumerable, massive and leafy branches to reach the heavens, like Peapul trees, the

majestic king sitting upon his brilliant throne, the glorious sages sitting above kings, potentates and emperors, upon their thrones of eternal peace and bliss placed upon the adamantine rock of Truth, and whatever is great, glorious, good and extraordinary, were to them the manifestations of the Divine Soul behind the universe. As every limb of a living man is filled with the man, similarly every important and impressive phenomenon in Nature was filled with that Divinity, in their eyes. That being the case, is it not natural that the innocent and pure-hearted people of the period, and especially the inhabitants of Gokula, before whose eyes these incidents took place, should not look upon these extraordinary disasters in the early life of our hero, as mere accidents which he accidentally escaped, but as the workings of some super-human evil powers which he was able to put down with his own superhuman divine power? The modern critics may pity the innocent convictions of the people of those old days, but if we compare the old with the modern views, we can in no way envy the knowledge and improvement which Natural Philosophy has given to our modern civilized men and women. It has taken away much of the poetry from our hearts and has thrown us into a dull, dead and inert world, where a small amount of precarious and transient sensual enjoyment is the only charm for us. By trying to take away our God from us, it is also trying to deprive us of an all-loving, all-protecting, all-gracious and all-good Father, Mother, Master or Friend and throw us upon the mercy of unflinching, changeless-heartless, and soul-less laws of action. If modern progress and civilization can give us nothing better than this, can we rightly feel any pride by imagining that we are happier and better than the innocent people of those ancient days, who always felt themselves protected and

safe under the parental care of an all-merciful and all-loving Power? If it is a fact that we create our own world, so that a happy man lives in a happy world, a miserable man lives in a miserable world, a saint lives in a world of saints, etc., then undoubtedly the happy men of those good old days were living in a safer and happier world. Their world was a picture of their own bright hearts.

Now to return to our hero, the commonest incidents of his early life being extraordinary and superhuman, he was naturally looked upon by all the inhabitants of Gokula as some divine being. Many such incidents are described in full in the glowing chapters of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. I will content myself by merely mentioning them for the present, referring my indulgent audience to those chapters for more detailed information.

Once upon a time his mother wanted to examine his mouth, to see whether he had swallowed some earth or not, and as soon as he opened it in obedience to his mother's behest, she saw the whole universe contained in his mouth! At one time he was very naughty, and so Yasoda wanted to bind him with a rope, as a punishment; she exhausted all the ropes in the house, but her child could not be bound! At last when he saw that his mother had become very much tired and exhausted, he allowed himself to be bound by her to a wooden mortar and she went about her household affairs. As soon as his mother left him, he began to crawl in the compound with the mortar at his back. He went out of the gate to a place where there were two big trees growing side by side so near each other that the gap between them could hardly give room for the baby to crawl through, while the mortar being too big, he had to give a hard pull to drag it after him. This brought down both trees with a

terrible crash, leaving him however unscathed : and out of them came two celestial beings who began to worship and praise the baby as God incarnate. When he was a little bigger and could walk and run about freely, one day a woman came to sell some nice fruits. Our little hero wanted to have some fruits and so he brought from his home some paddy, as much as could be contained between his tiny palms, to purchase the fruits with. The woman was so much pleased with the beautiful look of the child, as well as his sweet manners, that, although the grains were no remuneration even for a single fruit, she accepted them and filled his two palms with the best fruits in her basket. The child ran away overjoyed with those fruits. When the woman looked into her basket to adjust her fruits, to her great astonishment, she found that all those grains had been converted into precious gold and diamonds ! All such incidents impressed the idea of the child's divinity upon the minds of the inhabitants of Gokula, but their natural affection towards him made them frequently forget his superhuman character, and filled them with great terror as to the safety of that little wonderful soul from the incessant attacks of the demons sent by Kamsa. Thus frightened, Nanda, their chief, and Upananda, his brother, convened a meeting where they proposed to shift their habitations from Gokula to a more distant place called Sri Brindavana on the Yamuna which was most beautiful and attractive to look at, for Nature had spared no pains to make it vie with heaven itself. No sooner was this proposed than it was unanimously carried out by all, and next day the shepherds of Gokula with their families, children, cattle, and various furniture, headed by Nanda, left the place and went to Sri Brindavana, the Paradise on earth. Sri Krishna was five years of age at this time.

Within a very few days the natural beauty of their new town was enhanced by the skilful hands of Art ; and houses, streets, and temples, as well as a large concourse of cowherds with their families and cattle, now gave life to the place which formerly had been the haunts of sweet singing birds and roving beasts. There was a hill, called Govardhana, very near it, and everything around was so beautiful to look at, that mother Nature seemed to have taken particular care to adorn and beautify it to give a suitable reception to her lord and master, who was living in Nanda's house in the form of a baby. And so, when the cowherds of Gokula shifted to Sri Brindavana, all Nature sang forth the sweetest praises to the saviour of the earth through the throats of her sweet-singing and beautiful-looking birds, while her murmuring Yamuna, the whispering breeze, and blossom-laden trees with their offerings of flowers, all unitedly worshipped and began to chant hymns softly in honour of the divine boy of Nanda. Within a very short time they found the place perfectly comfortable, and led the happiest of lives in that sweet Arcadia, like gods in Heaven. Nanda's child went by the name of Sri Krishna, but his parents used to call him Gopala.

He was very brisk in his early boyhood, nay sometimes naughty. He used to steal the butter intended for offering to God, and eat it himself. He found a peculiar pleasure in teasing the shepherd girls who, sometimes, used to come in a group to complain to his mother against him, but when the mother offered to chastise him, they would request her to forgive him that time, for although he used to tease them, they could not help loving him—he was so beautiful and charming.

We have already seen how the seventh child of Devaki was transferred to the womb of Rohini, Vasudeva's

first wife, and how on account of this the child was known as Sankarshana. This child too was very fair and charming to look at, and for this reason he was called Rama. Although Yasoda's son, Sri Krishna, was unruly and disobedient to others, he was fully obedient to Rama, his elder brother. Rama was more robust in constitution, and was very plain, simple, fearless and bold ; while Sri Krishna was more cunning and intelligent, and very delicate and fragile to all outward appearance, although, in reality, none was equal to him in strength, either of body or mind. He loved and honoured his elder brother more than any one here in this earth. These two boys, along with other shepherd boys of the same age, used to tend a number of calves in the neighbouring pasture ground of Sri Brindavana. They were the merriest group of little boys. The calves used to graze in the pasture, while they spent their time in playing, whistling, hallooing and merry-making until they felt themselves hungry. Then they would lead their little drove to their homes where their mothers had been anxiously waiting with food in hand, looking towards the path to see whether their darlings were coming or not. As soon as they saw their mothers they would run towards them, and sometimes they used to narrate some terrible disasters that had befallen them in the pasture ground, as well as the narrow escape which, but for Rama and Krishna, they could not have effected. For, indeed, the wicked Kamsa used to send frequently one demon or another to kill Sri Krishna. These, in all their disguises, were sure to be detected and put to death by him or sometimes by his elder brother, Rama. When the mothers heard these incidents from their children, they used to clasp them in their bosoms, determining never to send them any more to the pasture ground, and thanking

God for His kind care in protecting their helpless ones, little deeming that so long as they were with Rama and Krishna, there could be no danger to them.

The fond mother Yasoda, too, would never consent to send her child to the forest lands which were beset with so many dangers for him. But as soon as the morning sun sent life and vigour into the limbs of these cherublike shepherd boys, they could not bear the idea of remaining confined in their houses, and begged and importuned their mothers to send them to the pasture grounds with their calves, until the latter were prevailed upon to do so.

The studied, strategic approaches of the demons sent by Kamsa, which Rama and Krishna with their playmates had to encounter every now and then in the forests, we cannot honestly explain away as mere accidents exaggerated into demon stories, without torturing the texts, and hiding the plain and clear meanings behind the strained and far-fetched interpretations of some of our critics. Even such arbitrary explanations cannot throw any light on most of these incidents, as we find them in the Puranas, and therefore these reckless critics have to take recourse to the theory of later additions and interpolations. Such guess-work can never give any satisfaction to a man even of an average understanding, and so instead of launching ourselves into the shoreless sea of such baseless judgments, it is better to look at them as they are, although they may appear in the present state of our knowledge to be mere impossibilities, remembering the instructive and beautiful saying which Shakespeare puts in the mouth of his hero Hamlet, "There are more things, Horatio, in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

I do not advise any man to believe anything blindly, but what I want to say is, that it is always better to reserve

judgment as long as one cannot properly convince others, as well as himself, as to the real state of affairs that took place in those Pauranical days, the only means of knowing which are from these Puranas. Science has proved many impossible things to be possible, and is it a wonder then, that what we cannot understand now and deem altogether impossible, may appear to us clear as daylight in some near or remote future ? So let us narrate the incidents in the life of Sri Krishna, just as we find them depicted in the glowing pages of *Srimad Bhagavatam* and other Puranas, and try to understand them in our modern light as much as we can. That will be doing justice to our ancient holy sages, to whom many profound Occidental savants give due respect and honour now-a-days, unlike our remarkably shallow critics who never scruple to send them down to the lowest level of hemp-smokers, and thus illustrate the proverb, " Fools trample where angels fear to tread ".

When we ponder upon the supernatural birth of Sri Krishna, when we consider the tyranny which the good folks had to undergo from the hands of the wicked at the time, when we consider the series of those miraculous incidents that followed him at every step after his birth, when we consider the irreligious and immoral attitude of the generality of the people, and at the same time, when we look into the past history of the world and see that whenever tyranny, irreligion, or immorality was rise in any part of it, that could not last long, because a deliverer was sure to come to the rescue of the suffering millions, we cannot but conclude him to be a saviour of the oppressed, deputed by God to look after the welfare of his children. And because divine power was acting through him, therefore all his works were extraordinary, and as such, ordinary people in vain rush to understand

them with their puny intellects. To understand a great man we must ourselves be great ; to reach a fruit on the highest branch of a tree, we must have to raise ourselves or something else to that level, if we want to get that fruit at all. If our critics want to understand Sri Krishna, let them at least imbibe a little bit of his infinite greatness. He is known as Hrishikesa, or lord of the senses ; so let our critics raise themselves above their senses, let them be proof against all sorts of temptations, and then they will be able to understand some of the extraordinary incidents in his life. Blinded by passions and desires, if a man attempts to know anything about the passionless doings of a saint's heart it will be as fruitless as a blind man's attempts to know what takes place in the Vimana or inner sanctuary of Sri Parthasarathi.* Many demons were sent by Kamsa to make an end of our hero, but instead of being able to kill him, they themselves were put to death by him, although in stature and strength they appeared to be thousand times bigger and stronger than he.

Bhagavan Patanjali, in his Yoga aphorisms, states what an infinite power mental concentration on the part of a man or a woman can bring to him or her. The scattered wind, like the scattered rays of the sun, has not much strength in it, but as the concentrated rays of the sun through a lens possesses burning power, so the concentrated mind of an individual can burn down his barrier of ignorance and enable him to see all. Concentration not only confers on a man mental power, but also superhuman physical strength, as we know from the aphorism *Baleshu Hasti Baladini*, i.e., when the mind

* The presiding deity of the Vaishnava temple in Triplicane, Madras.

is concentrated upon the strength of an elephant, lion, storm, thunder or any manifestation of the highest physical force, it imperceptibly imbibes the strength therefrom, and when the concentration is perfect, he becomes as strong as an elephant, a lion, a storm, etc. And he alone is qualified for such concentration who has not lost his individuality or masterly nature by being an abject slave to his senses, that is, who has become a Hrishikesa or Lord of the senses ; and as Sri Krishna was known by that name, showing that he was a master and not a slave to his passions and appetites, can there be any doubt that he was a Yogi of the highest type, and as such, all powers, whether mental or physical, were at his command ?

Apart from the attacks which he had to encounter constantly from the demons sent by Kamsa, he had to resist sometimes the celestial powers arrayed against him to test his divinity. Once when he was tending the calves with his companions in the forests of Sri Brindavana, a demon in the disguise of a big snake devoured all of them. But the indestructible Sri Krishna rent his throat and killed him on the spot, and gave life to his senseless companions after he had extricated them from the stomach of the demon ; and it was not very difficult for him to do so, as, being a born Yogi, he had full command over the elements, so that he could transform poison into nectar. This power of the Yogi is called *Yatrakamavasayitvam*, or the power of getting fulfilled whatever he desires, which is the result of his victory over all sensual enjoyments. Brahma, the Creator, was seeing all this from a distance, and he himself wanted to test the power of Sri Krishna once more. So he stole the calves of the shepherd boys as they were all on the bank of the Yamuna, taking their tiffin which they had

brought from their homes and had kept hanging upon the branches of the trees. When they could not see their calves, all began to weep, and Sri Krishna at once ran to see who had stolen them. As soon as he left them, Brahma stole also the shepherd boys and shut them up with their calves in a mountain cave where he kept them sleeping. In the meantime Sri Krishna searched every nook and corner of the forest, but he could not find any calf ; then he returned to the place where his companions had been, but finding none of them, he concentrated his mind and found out that this was all the stratagem of Brahma. Without showing the least sign of uneasiness he at once created out of his mind all the shepherd boys as well as their calves ; and when he returned home on that day, with all his mind-born play-fellows and calves, none of the shepherds and shepherdesses knew anything about the stealing of their darlings. They began to love their children more than before, and they did not know why.

The very sight of their children used to give them the highest bliss, which comes to him alone who realises the glory of his own real Self. This on-flow of love on the part of the shepherd girls towards their children is an undeniable proof of Sri Krishna's being the Soul of all souls, the Self of all selves with whom all souls are eternally united, whereas the connection with our earthly children is only throughout this life and hence temporary. Thus our love towards our children, although it seems to be natural, is really acquired and based upon the wrong notion of " I and Mine " instead of the right one of " Thou and Thine ". This natural outpouring of love towards Sri Krishna can only be accounted for in his being the Soul of our souls or in other words in his being God Himself.

This state of affairs went on for a year ; and when Brahma saw this power of Sri Krishna, he marvelled, and admitted his superiority in being able to create out of his will ; for he had hitherto thought himself to be the only creator. So he appeared before, and bowed down to Sri Krishna, who, in the meantime, had shown him some other instances of his divine power. Brahma then asked his forgiveness in not being able to recognise him as the sole Lord of the Universe.

If we, with Brahma, admit him to be the God-incarnate, then there can be no doubt in us as to his creating shepherd boys and calves out of his mind. But in this sceptical age such a faith is hard, nay, almost impossible to expect from our so-called educated young men who talk much but do little ; so let me quote here the opinions of our ancient philosophers as to whether such a creation, on the part of a higher man, say, a Yogi, is possible or not. None of our ancient sages or philosophers ever doubted Bhagavan Patanjali when he enumerated his own experiences in his own philosophy, named Pātanjala Darśana, and we have no good reason why we should doubt him now for we are in no way better thinkers than they were, as has been admitted by many profound Western philosophers. Patanjali's opinions being the opinions of all the theistic and atheistic philosophers of ancient days, quoting him is as good as quoting all of them. What the author of the Yoga philosophy says, requires a little practice on the part of the hearer to fully comprehend. If a boor from the inland, who has no idea of the topography of his land, and who has never seen a sea before, comes by rail and is made to stay shut up in one of the houses of Triplicane here, at a little distance from the sea, can you convince him that there is a vast ocean lying there a few steps

from this place ? His view being bounded by the four walls of the room, he will have full right to deny or doubt your assertion, and he will actually do so. But if you just take him out for a walk and bring him face to face with the ocean, he will then be convinced of his ignorance. Since mere wrangling can bring about such a doubt even as to the existence of this vast, tangible ocean of ours, is it then strange that mere foolish talking can bring nothing but scepticism in our minds, if we do not prop up our theories with a little bit of practice ?

Bhagavan Patanjali says, that as by blowing with our mouth upon some burning cinders we can create many sparks out of them, similarly a Yogi, by blowing upon his own egoism with the breath of his own intense desire, can bring about the existence of other minds out of that egoism, which are fully dependent upon him. When a Yogi acquires such a power, if he then wants to enjoy many things simultaneously, he can create as many individuals as he likes out of himself, and enjoy several things simultaneously with them, they being fully dependent upon and in no way different from him. The two aphorisms which contain this view run thus :— *Nirmanachittani asmitamatrata, Pravritti-bhede prayojakam chittam ekam anekesham, i.e.,* New minds are created purely out of egoism, and although those minds may be many, and their tendencies may be various, still they are fully subservient to the mind of the Yogi.

So we can have a glimpse of how Sri Krishna created the shepherd boys and their calves out of himself. When Brahma saw all this, he worshipped the seeming shepherd boy and woke up all his play-fellows and their calves from that long sleep, restored them to him, and taking his permission, went away to his own sphere. His mind-born shepherd boys and calves, in the meantime,

were assimilated in him, and the parents of his friends knew nothing about it.

After this Sri Krishna put to death a demon, who was called Dhenukasura, in the palmyra grove, a little distant from Sri Brindavan, because the latter would not allow any one to eat the sweet fruits of those trees. Once when he was tending the calves with his playmates on account of excessive heat, they all felt thirsty and went into the Yamuna to slake their thirst. As soon as the shepherd boys drank the water, they all became senseless as the water was poisoned with the poison of a big snake, named Kaliya, who lived with his family in that part of Yamuna which, on that account, was called Kaliya's lake. Sri Krishna at once saved the lives of his friends by his divine power ; and tormented the snake so much that he was glad to leave the place with his family. Once the forest was on fire and all his playmates and calves were surrounded therewith and he saved them by putting down the fire.

When he grew up to be a big boy of nine or ten years, he argued with his father about the efficacy of yearly worshipping Indra, the king of gods. He saw that all the shepherds were intent upon celebrating their annual festival, and were making grand preparations for it ; but he convinced his father that it was wrong to worship a minor god, leaving the all-pervading, eternal and one God of the whole universe. For his part, he said, it was better to celebrate the festival in honour of the hill, Govardhana, which supplied their cattle with good grass, sheltered their town from storm and in several other ways was a real friend to them. Led away by his advice, Nanda ordered the shepherds to take all the preparations intended for Indra's festival upon the hill and there celebrate it, not in honour of the king of gods,

but of the hill itself. That year they had a grand festival on the Govardhana. This so much enraged Indra that he wanted to destroy the whole of Sri Brindavana with all its inhabitants by an incessant downpour of heavy rains and hail-stones, accompanied with a devastating hurricane. As soon as the rains began to pour down, the shepherds got so much frightened that they did not know what to do and were almost hopeless of their lives. Sri Krishna saw all these things, and knew them to be the doings of Indra ; and he wanted to teach him a lesson. So he, without any effort as it were, lifted up the hill Govardhana and placed it upon the tip of the small finger of his left hand, requesting all the shepherds and shepherdesses to take their shelter under it. For a week he remained in that posture sheltering all his relatives and friends and cattle from the all-destroying hailstorm and rain. When Indra saw the superhuman power of the seeming shepherd boy, he came to know who he was, stopped the rain, and asked his forgiveness for the blunder which he had committed in not knowing him to be the conquerer of external as well as internal Nature, whereas he (Indra) was only the lord of the outside universe.

Beauty is the only thing which attracts a human mind here. By the word beauty we must not understand the beauty of form only. Beauty is sensed and perceived by each one of our six senses ; eyes perceive the beauty of forms ; ears, the beauty of sounds, such as melodious and musical voice ; tongue senses the beauty of taste ; nose, the beauty of smell, such as the fragrance of flowers ; the skin, the beauty of touch, such as the soft breath of a cool and mild breeze, the sweet embrace of loving friends ; and the mind perceives the beauty of thought, such as a thoughtful dissertation

by a profound and skilful writer. Any one of these beauties has full power in it to attract a perceiving man. None of us here perhaps has seen with his eyes Mr. Gladstone, the grand old man, but still many of us love him, simply because we have perceived his beauty with our mind in his broad and liberal views, as depicted in the columns and pages of our newspapers and magazines. The man who possesses one of these six kinds of beauty, commands the love and respect of the whole humanity. The most beautiful person, the best musician, the best cook, the best perfumer, the best manufacturer of all kinds of luxuries that give the highest enjoyment to our flesh, the greatest hero who protects our life and property and those whom we hold most dear from the ravages of marauding hosts and wins for us new territories, the best thinker, wit, humorist, all have been commanding the love and respect of the whole humanity ever since the creation. Since we can exact the love and admiration of all people, if we can have *one* of these beauties at our command, is it not natural for the man who possesses all these beauties simultaneously, to be loved, respected, honoured, nay, deified by the whole human race ?

Such was the case with Bhagavan Sri Krishna. He was the most beautiful man, the best musician, the greatest thinker and orator—as we know him from his *Gita*—the mightiest of all, and giver of all comforts. Our Puranas, as well as the great historical epic, *Sri Mahabharatam*, reveal to us all these characteristics about him. Is it then a wonder that he commanded the love and respect of almost all the people of the time with the exception of a few vain and wretched individuals who had no eye to see any beauty anywhere save in themselves ? By his victory over his senses, he attracted the minds of the all-renouncing sages who, on that

account, loved to call him Hrishikesa. He won the hearts of his parents by his obedience, dutifulness, and sweetness of appearance and manners, which enhanced their natural affection towards him a thousandfold. He won the hearts of his friends by his unbounded love towards them, as well as by constantly protecting them from all dangers. He won the most intense love of all the young shepherd girls by his unparalleled personal beauty. His all-protecting power won for him the regard of all his neighbours, nay, of the whole humanity. It was therefore, natural for him to be regarded as God-incarnate, even if we do not take into account the signs and miracles that accompanied his birth. Some people, even up to this time, regard him, not as a part and parcel of God, or as a means to reach the highest God, but as God Himself. How this has come to take place, how these people are not losers in any way, and how they look down upon all other ideas of God save that of their own ideal, Sri Krishna, we shall next consider.

Many people there are who think that those who believe in a God with form, are nothing better than mere brainless fools. To confine the infinite God in a finite human form is as impossible as to confine the water of the whole ocean in a tiny one-ounce bottle. They hold God to be all-pervading and therefore formless, and they pride themselves on being believers in one, formless, eternal, and all-pervading God and look down upon those who believe in God with forms. Let us see how far this faith honestly tallies with their practice. Now, by God everyone understands the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe, the King of kings, the Emperor of emperors, the all-powerful, all-merciful, all-gracious and all-knowing Father of the entire cosmos. This is the universal idea of God.

Now if a man be sitting alone in his room, being left to himself, he can do anything and everything that he likes, there being no one to criticise or find fault with him. So he thinks himself perfectly free. But after a while his servant announces to him from outside that a certain gentleman wants to have an interview with him. Then if he has thrown down his cloth on account of excessive heat, he picks it up, puts on a shirt, combs his hair, stands before his looking glass, and sees whether everything is all right, and then tells his servant to bring in the gentleman. To see a gentleman, he must have to be a gentleman himself, so that he may please him and be favourably looked upon by him. In so doing he has sacrificed his independence and tried his best to suit himself to the taste and liking of his gentleman visitor. Now, suppose the visitor to be the wealthiest, most kind-hearted, and most honourable man in the province, then although he may naturally be a very conceited and capricious sort of man, still he altogether banishes all his conceits and caprices, becomes a perfect gentleman, tries to look humble and amiable, so that he may gain some favour and good opinion from him. For the time being his old self is banished, and a new self which may be liked and loved by his honourable visitor, takes its place ; that is, he raises himself to the level of the honoured self of the gentleman, or he becomes a little Mr. So and So. For, what does a man really like and love ? His own self. In the Upanishads we learn, " Do not think that a man loves his child for the child's sake, but he loves his child because by loving him his own self is pleased ; so, virtually, he loves his own self." Really, if by loving his wife, children, relatives, or friends he had to undergo and experience any kind of pain, either physical or mental, then no one could love his wife,

children, relatives, or friends. So whenever a man loves his wife or children, he virtually loves his own self in the form of his wife or children. Hence, it is clear, that whenever I try to be liked or loved by another, I will have to transform myself into him or her, and then he or she will be able to love me.

Now every one wants to be loved by his God, for from God alone he gets whatever is good and enjoyable here. So if he wants to be loved by God he must have to be a little bit of a God Himself, otherwise there is no hope of his being loved by God. That is the reason why our Scriptures enjoin, *Devobhutva devam yajet*, i.e., worship God by being a God. That is the reason why there is no essential difference between God and His devotees, except in the point of power, God being infinitely powerful, and a devotee possessing only a little power. That is the reason why in the most orthodox temples of Southern India Pariah devotees are worshipped by the most orthodox Brahmanas who, if they smell a Pariah two miles off, must needs bathe and purify themselves by uttering the holy names of their gods.

If this be the case, the worshipper of a formless God must have to imbibe a little bit of the nature of his God, that is, he must have to be formless himself, so that he may be liked and loved by his God Who is formless and if he wants to be formless, he must have to go beyond his body. By going beyond his body he must have to go beyond the world which is only perceivable by the body. By going beyond the world, he will have to cut off all concerns with his beloved wife, loving children, his most beautiful buildings and gardens, his name, fame and honour, his desire to ameliorate the condition of his people, in short, anything and everything which he, at present, holds very dear. Since such is the case, let him

go and consult with his better half, and if her ladyship allows him, and if he himself finds it feasible, let him cut off all concernments with her and with anything and everything which he holds most dear, and thus if he can get beyond his body, he will really be a worshipper of the formless God. If not, he is merely a vain talker. His idea of an infinite formless God is nothing more than one's idea of infinite and formless space. If he is ready to consider this blank space as his God, I pity the poor man. He has not yet learned the rudiments of religion.

Now as regards confining an infinite God in a finite body, I will only have to remind my critic that no one has ever been able to confine his mind in a human frame three-and-a-half cubits in length ; and as mind is more akin to the real man than the body, so virtually no man in this earth is confined in his body. Mind is now here ; I can at once send it to the sky, the sun, the moon, or the stars, nay it can be made to embrace the entire celestial sphere. As the sun is not confined in his luminous disc alone, but permeates all space, as it were, through his rays similarly no human being is entirely confined in his body. Since it is impossible to confine an ordinary human mind fully in a body, is it not much more impossible to confine the Divine Mind of God in the body which He assumes either playfully or for the sake of some of His devotees ? So it is foolishness to think that if we invest our God with a body by so doing we can ever limit Him. Nothing can limit the limitless God although He may appear to be limited in a body. If Sri Krishna had been entirely confined in his body, it would have been impossible for him to show his universal form to Arjuna.

Now, therefore, he who honestly believes in a god with a beautiful form, the very fact of his God being

beautiful naturally attracts his whole soul towards Him. He almost becomes mad after Him, and forgets all other duties in the service of his Master. In the life of the author of the *Sri Krishnakarnamrita*, we find that when he was young, he was mad after a dancing girl, so much so, that the dancing girl herself, being struck with his intense love towards her and knowing herself to be quite unworthy of such pure devotion, reminded him, that if he had but directed this devotion towards the source of all beauty, the most loving Sri Krishna of blessed Brindavana, he would have been one of his most favourite devotees by that time, which remonstrance, going directly home to his heart, made one of the greatest devotees and best poets of him. Since a common earthly beauty has power to madden a man, is it at all wonderful that the divine beauty of God, the Creator of all beauties more than maddens that fortunate devotee who has been able to see and realize it ? God is almighty and all-gracious. This is unanimously admitted by almost all the religions of the world. Now, therefore, if a sincere devotee, honestly believing in the words of his Scriptures, believes that his God is the most beautiful of all beautiful beings, and so believing if his incessant prayer to that God is for only a sight of that beautiful form of His, can that God, if He be all-powerful and all-gracious, remain silent to the prayers of that sincere man ? In the *Gita* Sri Krishna says, "Whoever wants to see Me in whatever light or form, I fulfil his desire by assuming that form" ; and this assertion is exactly compatible with His all-gracious nature.

Now, therefore, suppose a devotee sees the beautiful form of His Beloved. Can he ever imagine turning his eyes away from such beauty ? Can he ever like to destroy that beautiful form of His and regard Him as formless ?

No. As an insect gets infatuated by seeing the glory of a burning flame and will rather die in it than turn itself away from it, so the devotee who is once blessed with the sight of the divinely beautiful form of his God, can never imagine thinking Him otherwise. He then does not care to know anything about your Monism, or Qualified Monism, Dualism or Pluralism, about your knower, knowledge, or known ; all your "isms" and all your philosophies appear to him to be as merely so much prattling ; but he enjoys His Beloved forgetting all other concerns, even as a bee sitting upon the bosom of a honey-laden flower drinks the honey and forgets every other thing. He does not regard that form of his God as a means to an end, as a step to take him to the brink of shoreless and shapeless infinity, but as an end in itself. Therefore he naturally regards his God either as his eternal Master, or Friend, or Beloved, nay, sometimes he looks towards Him with an intense affection such as that of a father or a mother towards his or her dearly beloved child.

The shepherds and shepherdesses of Sri Brindavana found such a God in their beloved Sri Krishna. They could not regard him as a human being, on account of his supernatural actions, superhuman powers, and extraordinary beauty, so they naturally regarded him as nothing less than God. Yasoda and Nanda regarded this God as their sweet darling, the shepherd boys as their own sweet companion and friend, the young shepherd girls could not help regarding him as their own beloved, the sages, who knew him to be an incarnation of God, regarded him as their master, while some others, knowing his inner self to be beyond the reach of all activities either physical or mental, and therefore resting in eternal peace, gained eternal peace in him. Blessed

were indeed the inhabitants of Sri Brindavana who had such an easily reachable God among them !

There are many Vaishnava philosophers who regard Sri Krishna to be the highest God, higher than Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Siva the destroyer ; for they say that these latter gods have certain duties to do, and as such, they should be regarded as servants and not gods, and servants, to whom ? To Sri Krishna who with flute in his hand merrily sings away his time leaving the duties of creating, preserving and destroying to their hands. Can the loving servants who surround a master, ever bear to see him working in their presence ? The desire of a good servant is to see his master never troubled in any way. So how can the innumerable devotees who surround God, ever bear to see their Beloved bound in chains of duty ? Hence we must have to conclude that God is beyond all duties, and if that God ever does any work, it is simply playfully. This is the reason why these Vaishnava philosophers regard the Sri Krishna of Brindavana as altogether different from the Sri Krishna of Mathura and Dvaraka, who is a worker and not a master, and therefore who is regarded as the incarnation of God, while the Pastoral Sri Krishna is regarded by them as God Himself.

Our hero was now in the prime of youth. Goddess Beauty, charmed, as it were, with his attractive person, resplendent with divine glory, wanted to make it her permanent abode, and so she left her various habitations, such as the full moon, the full-blown lotus, the smiling dawn, the dewy flowers, the variously coloured rainbow, the rippling and murmuring streamlets, the golden-plumed and sweet-singing birds, the pure and spotless hearts of the sages, and sundry other charming abodes, all of which were ashamed of themselves, and completely

put into the shade, when they looked at the all-beautiful swain of Sri Brindavana. Is it strange then that this irresistible charm of his person should win for him the hearts of all the young maidens of the place? They were really mad after him. There was in that sweet Arcadia a shrine of the goddess Katyayani, who was celebrated for her infinite grace and mercy towards her devotees who used to get all their desires fulfilled through her. On one auspicious day, these maidens therefore naturally went to the shrine of the goddess, and each of them inwardly prayed to her that she might have the charming son of Nanda as her husband, and took the vow of fasting that whole day before her, and worshipping her with flowers and offerings. After fulfilling their vow, in the evening, they all came in a group to the Yamuna to refresh themselves with a bath in her cool and limpid water. With this intention they took off all their clothes, kept them upon the bank and went into the river like so many Eves of Eden, as the place was perfectly solitary. They bathed and played in the water for a while, and in the gloom of twilight, all left the water and went to take their respective clothes, but alas! none of them was to be found there! They timidly gazed hither and thither, and at last one of them descried that her own beloved, for whom she had fasted the whole day, had carried all their clothes away and climbed up a tree hard by. In shame, some of them went back to the water, others requested, begged and importuned him to return to them their clothes as the night was fast approaching and they must go back to their homes, so that their elders might not rebuke and scold them. At this the rustic charmer smiled and from his high place thus addressed them, "I know, O! ye girls, why you have fasted to-day, for nothing can be hidden from my

view ; and to test your love towards me I have done this unseemly deed, for which I hope, you will forgive me. It is not mere playfulness that has induced me to take your clothes away from you, but an intense desire to teach you what it is to love. Love is complete self-forgetfulness. A lover should be so much filled up with his or her beloved, that he or she should not have any other idea in his or her mind. How can the fear of shame, contumely, reproach, or scandal find any place in such a lover ? Love is fully unselfish, and therefore has nothing to do with carnality. I hope that you may be blessed with such a divine love towards me ! " And with this, he returned them their clothes and vanished.

Some may ask, why Sri Krishna selected such an awkward and unseasonable time to preach his short sermon on love to the shepherd girls ? In the third chapter of Genesis we find that when Adam and Eve were in their pristine purity, before their fall, although they were really naked, still they did not appear to be naked and unseemly to each other. As soon as they disobeyed their Father in heaven, and allowed themselves to be led away by the wily temptations of the arch-enemy, and thus learned to split up their one idea of goodness into two, such as good and evil, seasonable and unseasonable, attractive and awkward, etc., then they thought fit to cover their nakedness with big leaves of trees, that they might appear in a more becoming way before their Father ; for, at that time, even to think of going in their former child-like simplicity before the Most High, brought the blush of shame on their countenance. Just before this, they were above all carnality,—purer than even the gods. But when they lost that glory, they had to labour like all their future progeny, to most of whom, unfortunately, they bequeathed more of what

they got from the prince of darkness than what they got from their legitimate and eternal Father. As Sri Krishna was above all idea of carnality, he could do nothing which might bring shame to him, and as he wanted the shepherd girls to get the real love which is above all sensual motive, and as their minds were at that time filled with an intense love towards himself, he rightly hoped that his words would be fully impressive and effective. So he is not in any way blamable for his conduct, which in an ordinary man of the world could not but be culpable.

On one autumnal night, when the full moon was raining showers of nectar upon the thirsty earth in the shape of her balmy rays, when a soft and mild breeze was engaged in carrying to Him the sweet fragrance of fresh-blown flowers, when the murmuring Yamuna was singing sweetly all His divine glories, when the lilies opened their soft and white bosoms to be kissed by the wooing breeze when the two soft-natured sisters, Sleep and Repose, had paid their nocturnal visits to almost half the population of Sri Brindavana, Sri Krishna was sitting alone near the forest side, on the bank of the Yamuna, with his flute in hand. Seeing the beauty all around and excited by it, he began to play the sweetest tune on his flute. The willing breeze carried the soothing melodies everywhere ; at last it brought them to the ears of the buxom shepherd girls who were altogether maddened by them. One of the girls was suckling her child, she left it there upon the cradle, unmindful of its weeping, and ran to meet her beloved ; another was distributing food to her elders, she left her task partially done and ran out ; a third was in her toilet room and her toilet was only half finished, but regardless of her ludicrous state, she ran ; a fourth was cooking for the family

and she left the food, almost ready, upon the oven, and ran ; a fifth was with her husband, and she left him on the bed and ran ; in short, all young girls, whoever heard that voice, in whatever condition they were, unmindful of that, maddened by the melodies, hastened towards the bank of the Yamuna, where they expected to see their beloved. Although their parents, brothers, elders and husbands scolded and rebuked them for it, they did not care at all ; shame and reverence were sacrificed at the altar of an attraction that far exceeded all worldly considerations. Each one, when she was starting from her house, thought of meeting her beloved alone on the solitary and breezy bank of the Yamuna, pleasantly lighted by the balmy rays of the moon. But all of them met half way, and in a group they at last reached the side of their beloved.

When, in that late hour of night, Sri Krishna saw all the young girls of Vraja (another name for Sri Brindavana) assembled round him, he was put into a very false position. But at last he thought that perhaps some fresh calamity had befallen the shepherds, and for that reason they had come to ask his help. So he asked them why at that late hour they had come there ; and also inquired if attracted by the sweet sound of his flute they had come to see and hear him play. But seeing no sign of anxiety in their faces, which must have been there had there been any real calamity, he concluded that it must be the melody of his flute, as well as his personal beauty, that had caused them to leave their homes at such a late hour ; so he reprimanded them for taking undue liberty with their husbands and elders, and exhorted them to love and honour their partners in life, to look after their children, to serve their superiors, and mind all their household duties. He also told them

that even if one's husband be blind, or lame, or dumb, or even a leper, he should be served, respected and loved by all chaste women if they desired eternal bliss hereafter. So He wanted them to go home.

At this the shepherd girls began to weep, and then with a little indignation, the outcome of unrequited love, told Him, "O Beloved ! how can it be possible for us to return to our homes ? All our senses have been enchanted by your sweet person, the abode of divine beauty. Our whole soul has been centred in you. You have stolen all our powers of motion and now you ask us to go. How can we go at all ? It is impossible to recede a single step from your fascinating presence. Can a bird, fascinated by the glowing eyes of a snake, go back to her nest ? She will die in the mouth of the viper, but the very idea of returning home at the time is simply impossible for her. Infatuated she forgets her consort, as well as her young ones anxiously waiting for her return; and so is it with us." They then became silent. Sri Krishna took pity on them, and played and danced with them. At this, the girls were very much puffed up. They thought themselves to be the most fortunate women in the world and began to strut like peacocks. Thus vanity entered their minds, and Sri Krishna immediately disappeared in order to dispel their vanity, and test their love towards him.

When the helpless Gopis found out that their vanity had cost them their own beloved, they became actually mad, and as all other ideas had vanished from their minds save that of Sri Krishna, they lived, moved and had their being in him alone. All their thoughts, therefore, naturally dwelt upon his doings and personal beauty and strength. Some Gopis even identified themselves with their beloved, and thought themselves Sri Krishna, and

caught hold of and pulled some others, thinking them to be demons sent by Kamsa. In this way they enacted the manners and doings of their beloved, forgetting their homes, relatives and children. At last feeling themselves exhausted, they began to search after him. They began madly to ask the earth, the trees, the plants, the flowers, whether they had seen their dear one. At last they detected his foot-prints, along with those of someone else, whom they concluded to be a good, humble and fortunate shepherded girl, his especial favourite, whom he had taken to a solitary place to enjoy her company, leaving all of them to their vanity. After searching for a while, guided by those footmarks, they heard and described a girl weeping loudly at some distance. They hurried to the place and inquired the cause of her lamentation. The girl narrated how Sri Krishna had taken her away from their company when he had seen them puffed up with vanity, how he had adorned her with flowers, how they had walked and walked together in the solitary forest, how feeling tired and infatuated with vanity herself, she had requested him to carry her through the forest, how he had stooped down, and put forward his shoulders and requested her to get upon them, and how as soon as she had wished to do so, he had vanished, leaving her all alone in that solitary forest to weep in vain for him. The other girls took pity on her, and all went together to the bank of the Yamuna ; there they sat down, forgetting all about their homes and families, and began to pray to Sri Krishna, with such fervour and devotion, with such an infatuated love, with such an intense yearning of their hearts, to forgive them and once more appear before them, that he at last had to appear. He found out that it was not lustfulness, but something very much higher and

nobler than that, which had moved the shepherd girls to take such a rash step, and had made them forget all fear, all shame, and all earthly concerns. So this time, instead of pitying them, he had a great regard for them. He decorated his naturally beautiful form with a garland, and looked most charmingly beautiful ; then through his Divine Power, which I have already explained, he created as many similar forms out of himself as there were Gopis, and took each one of them by her hand, and began to play and dance with all of them simultaneously, each one having her beloved by her side. They played and danced and kissed and embraced each other until they were completely tired. At last they went into the Yamuna, played in the water for a while, took a pleasant bath and came up perfectly refreshed. After this, they went away to their respective homes, where they were not suspected by their husbands of spending the whole night outside, since through the Divine Power of Sri Krishna, their husbands had found them by their sides all through the night.

This incident in Sri Krishna's life goes by the name of *Rasalila*. Critics are not wanting who find a great flaw in his character in this portion of his life ; but they commit a great mistake in classifying him as human. After what we have learned in our previous discourse, about this Godman's life, is it reasonable for us to class him with ourselves ! Almost every incident in his life is superhuman. In such a case, how can we reckon him as man ? And since he was not man, we must not judge him from our standpoint. What is bad for us must be good for him. The food of a baby is milk ; if I force it to eat highly seasoned and thickly buttered solid food, it will die. It is a crime to give such food to a baby. But for an adult, it is healthy and invigorating,

and instead of being a crime, it will be a work of great merit on my part, if I can daily supply a young man with such food, for thereby I will give him life and health. So what is criminal in one case is meritorious in another. What is culpable in a man, may be laudable in a god. If an extremely rich man who has ample money to spare without entailing on himself any loss, injury or harm, drives away a starving beggar who asks only a two-anna bit of him to buy some food with and thus appease his hunger, how do we generally regard such a mean and monstrous being? We never condescend to utter his name even,—so hateful and detestable he appears to us. If Sri Krishna had not met the intense cravings of the shepherd girls, while he possessed ample power of meeting all such demands, which was almost nothing to him, he would have been similarly blamable for his heartlessness and cruelty. We have seen how worldly charms had no influence over him, how instead of being a slave to his senses, he was master of them. The great sage Suka Deva, describes him as *Aptakamah* and *Atmaramah*, i.e., having no want, or perfect, and finding sole enjoyment in his self and self alone. Such a being could never be affected in any way by associating or coming in contact with all sorts of temptations, since they had lost all their charms for him. As the God Rudra can digest all kinds of poison, as fire can burn down all things, similarly the mighty Shepherd Boy of Sri Brindavana by his super-human power, could trample down all temptations without any effort. But as a man or a woman should not imitate Rudra in taking poison, so he or she should not imitate Sri Krishna in so freely mixing with the youthful beauties of the other sex, who should be regarded by him or her as so many poisoned udders which are always very charming and harmless to see at a distance.

A charmer like him can get no injury in freely playing with them, but ordinary people, if they even attempt to do so, are sure to die at the very outset.

I hope these considerations have amply proved that it is death for a man to imitate the doings of God. We should always abide by the lessons they teach. In the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, among the counsels given by the sage to his disciples, beginning from "Tell the truth, do your duties, etc." we find this advice also, "You should follow those examples of ours which will do you good, and not others." Those who have gone beyond all material or earthly convictions, have no law, mandatory or prohibitory, to bind them. As long as a man has any connection with society, he is bound to obey the laws of it. The simplest form of society is what is composed of two individuals, and even in such a society one individual must have to respect the feelings of the other, although very few may be the restrictions in such a case. As the society becomes more and more complex, or composed of various individuals with diverse tastes and sentiments, the restrictions increase more and more in number. A member of such society must have to obey all those laws that are intended for its good, such as morality, civil and criminal codes, hygienic laws, etc. Since a real sage has gone beyond society, he can be restricted by no law, being perfectly free. Even if he be in society, it can have no place in him, as water can never find any place in or moisten the lotus leaf, although it has been there ever since its birth. Hence he should not be regarded as a member of society, although he may be in it, and we should not judge him from our social standpoint. Although Sri Krishna was immersed in the company of young ladies, still none of them had any place in him. Such great beings—doing, do not

eating, eat not (*Gita* v. 8, 9). Some one may here step forward and say that it is a very easy thing to be a sage ; by leading a reckless life, any man may become one. These people commit a great mistake. We can never accuse the true sages of leading lawless and therefore immoral lives. Rather they are the personified images of morality. For what is morality ? When a man's desires and appetites do not go beyond a certain limit, we call him moral. But these sages have altogether no desire or appetite. How can it be possible for them to be immoral at all ? There is a change of a moral man sometimes becoming immoral, as he has not given up his desires which are apt to tempt and bring down even a God from heaven ; is it, then, a wonder that however morally strong a son of man may be, he is never proof against temptations ? But as darkness can never approach the sun, similarly temptations can never approach the real sages who are far greater than gods. A man should follow a great man, for being a man, all his ways must be human and not superhuman ; therefore, instead of being harmful, the imitation of such men will do him ample good. But in the case of those people who can in no way be regarded as men, we must not follow them in all their ways, for that will be harmful, nay, sometimes fatal to us.

That the love of the Gopis towards Sri Krishna was not carnal is best attested by the fact that those Gopis who were not allowed to go out of their homes by their elders, thus shut up in their rooms, immediately gave up their bodies through an intense love towards their beloved, which took their spirits at once to his feet by drawing their minds away from all earthly concerns. Hence death, of being a fearful thing, as is the case with all ordinary mortals, was merely a plaything to them. They

could court it at their will. Such is the indescribable power of genuine love. The personal charm of Sri Krishna was, no doubt, a cause of great attraction to them at first, but this very thing served to make them totally unmindful of themselves, and ultimately took them away from all their bodily concernments. Can we style such a love as carnal ?

Some people want to look upon the whole of *Rasalila* as an allegory. According to them the Gopis represent the *Sattvika* devotees who do not want to parade their piety and devotion who, when they want to pray, do not go to a 'synagogue' but shut themselves up in their rooms, and there pour forth their whole soul to God. They do not allow others to know anything about their devotion, and these people consequently take them to be common men of the world, although like the needle of a compass their minds are always directed towards the magnetic pole of the lotus feet of God. Although the shepherd girls were engaged in all their household duties and appeared as so many dutiful wives and mothers, still their whole souls were filled with Sri Krishna every moment of their lives.

Thus Rama and Krishna lived in Brindavana for some time more, killing still other demons sent by Kamsa, till the latter wanting to meet the two brothers personally, so that he might put them to death by the combined power of many puissant athletes, invited Nanda and his subjects to a grand annual festival in which splendid wrestling matches were the especial attraction for the people. Akrura, the messenger, came accordingly and took Rama and Krishna in his chariot, while Nanda and his subjects followed in their own carriages with ample presents for Kamsa. When the chariot of Akrura came to the place where they should cross the Yamuna to reach

Mathura, the city of Kamsa, Rama and Krishna got down from the carriage to take a bath in the river as it was noontide. Vaishnava poets say that when the pastoral and playful Sri Krishna of the blessed Brindavana plunged into the Yamuna to bathe, he rose no more, and in his place came up Sri Krishna, the Defender of the Vedas and the Brahmanas, the greatest statesman, orator and hero of the period, the most serious and practical philosopher the world has ever produced.

In so short a time to tell even a few incidents in the life of our hero fully, is simply impossible. To comprehend and grasp a single event in his life may require the labour of a whole lifetime. Hence it is impossible to draw even an outline of his character in such a small discourse. It is high time for me also to stop. So, for the present, let me be satisfied with presenting to you an unfinished sketch of one of the most glorious beings whom our mother earth has ever given birth to. This is the anniversary of that auspicious day which ushered into the world one of its greatest luminaries, who still continues to give light and knowledge to the whole humanity through his immortal song divine, the wonder of all ages, the solace of all hearts, the guide to the realm of Truth, the light in the darkness of ignorance, the essence of the Upanishads, the death-destroying nectar, I mean the *Bhagavad Gita*. Therefore I feel myself highly fortunate to have been called upon to lisp out a few words concerning his glorious life with my deplorably limited capacity, in a meeting of his devotees, and in the vicinity of his temple. May He send us His ever fruitful blessings for ever, and may we never forget His Holy Feet.

Om tat sat

SRI KRISHNA, THE KINGMAKER

“NECESSITY is the mother of invention” is a very old saying. Indeed when we are in extreme need of anything, the intense desire, thus created in us, finds out a way to its fulfilment ; and the man or the woman who is fortunate to discover or invent that way first, is held in very high estimation by the whole of humanity. Hence people, who regard this world and its concerns to be all in all, give all those honours to worldly men and women which the pious men give to God. Columbus, James Watt, Franklin, George Stephenson, Edison and many others command more respect in the West from many than even God Himself : for very few can believe in things which transcend the senses, such as, after-life, eternity, God. But however the scientific positivist may overlook the teleological side of the phenomenal universe, there is an innate faith in almost all men and women in a Being who transcends, rules over, and guides all phenomena. Although sometimes materialism, or worldliness confines the views of the denizens of this planet to the earth and earth alone, it has no power to obliterate the nature of man, which always aspires after life and bliss eternal, as well as after perfect knowledge of all things, and whose immense appetite can never be appeased by anything short of them. Even an idiot hates to be known as such and always wants to pass as one in no way inferior to his neighbours. No man hates anything so much as death, and no man wants to be miserable. This clearly points out the nature of every human being, which is eternally blissful and omniscient or *Satchidanandam*.

Now if man is essentially eternal, he can have no connection with the body, which has a beginning and an end. If he is eternally blissful, he must have nothing to do with the body again, which, being permeated with nerves, brings him both pleasure and pain. If he is all-knowing, how can he be confined in a body, as the objects of his knowledge are scattered all over the infinite space, and as in order to know them he must have to come in contact with them, so he must have to be unconfined or limitless? Thus Reason has carried us so far as to show that the real man must be without any form, and hence without any name.

But whatever Reason may tell us, we are born with the idea of form and name, and all the people of the world deem these to be indissolubly connected with them. It is not strange therefore that every man and woman thinks himself or herself to be three and a half cubits in length, made up of bones, muscles, flesh, blood, brain and the nervous system. The infinite has shut itself up in a nutshell, and deems itself to be as such. It has become a man or a woman, and the man thinks that his capacities are few and limited. His mind can contain only a few ideas, his body can carry only forty pounds of weight or so. Can you convince him by way of argument, however cogent and irrefutable that may be, that he is infinite? Even if he understands, does he like to give up his conviction that he is a bodied being? No doubt, body gives him pain, but sometimes it gives him pleasure also. It is by means of his body alone that he can regard the beautiful girl there as his wife, the charming, sweet and cherub-like children playing on the lawn as his own offspring. Is not the earth beautiful with her fine scenery, her sweet singing birds, her sweet smelling flowers, her luscious and charming fruits, and

her fine breeze carrying balm for all fatigue and tiresomeness ? And how without a body can all these things be enjoyed ? So keep aside your philosophy, O wise, and allow man to enjoy the beautiful. You say that the world is not all beautiful, there is deformity side by side with beauty. But do you not know that that stands as a set off to enhance the beauty of the beautiful all the more ? He requires evil side by side with good, to appreciate and enjoy the beauty of goodness, for otherwise it would be insipid and unattractive. Thus man cannot leave the world for the sake of his wife and children, as well as various other charming things which ever active Nature is constantly bringing forth to fascinate him. He has been charmed by Nature, and therefore he can easily swallow without grumbling all those bitter doses, which she makes him incessantly drink along with occasional doses of pleasure, which she offers him with a niggardly hand. But the man does not know the deceit till too late, when death comes and knocks at his door to give him the unexpected and sad warning that it is time that he should take his last farewell from all those whom he has been thinking as his nearest and dearest friends on earth. "To go away from here ? Why, is this not my home ? Men only go away from places of sojourn to reach home; why should I be called away from my home ?" says the man. But Death is deaf to all this and says, "Be ready, there is no more time." "Is this not my home then ?" and the man shudders to think upon it. There is his wife weeping, and the children are looking towards him with bewildered and sorrowful gaze. A writhing pang thrills his heart and chills his body, till in agony of despair he gasps out his last breath, and leaves the body for ever. He dies a dupe to Nature, the mother of all deceitfulness, fair all outside, but bearing venom within.

Such is the life of the man of the world, and who is not a man of the world ? Everyone thinks that his home is here, and everyone therefore is always unwilling to leave it. Forgetful of the utterly precarious nature of his life, forgetful of the one certain fact of his final departure from here, the man of the world behaves like a mad man in thinking that to be his own, which really does not belong to him. The all-deluding idea of " I and mine " impels him to fight against his brother-men for a small scrap of land, for every trifling thing, and sometimes bloodshed and murder are the result. The thought of " I and mine ", is the cause. He does not consider that what he thinks to be his now, belonged to some one else before, and is going to belong to some one else hereafter. So how can that be his, which has come to him by accident, and which is to go away from him by accident ? To-day a man is poor, to-morrow he becomes rich, and a few days afterwards he again becomes poor. Where has the money gone ? It came of its own accord to him, and it left him of its own accord. So how can he rationally think that money to be his, since whatever belongs to him must depend upon him, whereas the money is totally independent of him. A man may be learned and vastly qualified, still he may be poor ; and on the other hand, a man may be nothing better than a dunce and still he may be a millionaire. Therefore, the great Bhishma-charya says, " Man is slave to money, but money is slave to none ; " and still he is under the illusion that money belongs to him, it is his property, and he has full right over it. What a delusion !

But this delusion every man inherits from his father, and his father has inherited it from his father and so on *ad infinitum*. Hence delusion is the only patrimony we can be proud of and what a wretched pride it is ! To

what an abject condition it reduces us. Upon this delusion are based all our social rules and regulations nay, all our higher moral ideas too are based upon this idea of "I and mine". "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you," means, regard all as yours. It broadens your idea of "I and mine" no doubt, but it does not save you from the hand of illusion. You have come from the unknown, and to the unknown you are destined to go. You are merely a stranger to this planet, and like a stranger you will have to leave it sooner or later. This is the bare truth devoid of all false ornamentation. Has a stranger any right to claim as his own the property that belongs to his host? So you have no right to call anything yours here, if you want to be saved from the hand of illusion.

This is what the wise advise us to do. But it is very easy to advise and most difficult to perform, and in this case, it is altogether beyond the power of a man to carry it out practically. As we cannot imagine a triangular circle, so we cannot imagine a world without the idea of "I and mine," which is the only pivot upon which the eternal wheel is revolving. From the lowest to the highest all men are imbued with this one idea. Hence a man can never save a man from the hand of illusion.

Is there then no Salvation? Is man always destined to be a plaything of this unconquerable demoness, the illusion, this *Maya*? The history of the world sometimes presents us with the lives of a few rare individuals who are altogether of different type from the ordinary men of the world. They never find any satisfaction from the teachings of human teachers. Human aspirations and ideals do not satisfy them. Lust and gold have no charm over them. Nature with all her loveliness can never fascinate them. The idea of "I and mine" has no place

in them. They do not condescend to travel through the paths taken up by the multitude of men who surround them. An altogether unthought of and new path each one of them must have to prepare for himself (and for those who will be willing to follow him) to satisfy his mental craving, for no earthly food can ever satisfy his hunger. He finds fault with the existing system of religion and education. He puts down the vanity of the pedants, wants to turn the course of society, and if he takes it into his head, sometimes wants to rebuild it. People look at him wonderingly, and ask "what sort of man this must be?" He claims no human teacher. Whence has he learned all his queer ways? He must have learned them from some unknown teacher, or it may be, he has learnt them from himself. He is his own teacher. But what a tremendous power he has, to set at naught the combined power of the whole human race ranged against him to put down his new theories and principles! How can they classify him as one of them? He must require some higher, nobler and better stuff to be formed as a man.

Thus naturally all men regard him as something superhuman or Divine, and of their own accord they invest him with the title of the "Incarnation of God." As his training and education have not proceeded from the school of the senses, they must have flowed from some supersensuous region, and hence naturally he must have many supersensuous experiences, which to us may appear as miraculous and hence incredible, still which we can not rationally deny, seeing that he owes not a tittle to any of our books, scientific or religious, but that he brings altogether new ideas and principles for our acceptance. The man who is fondly imagining that he is only three and a half cubits in length, and who never

wants to regard himself as anything higher than that, lest by so doing he may be unmindful of the charming Deity who presides over his life, his fair partner whom he regards as his better half, such a man may deny, like a frog in the well, that there can be anything higher and nobler than what his five senses present to him. He may quote the philosophy of Comte to support his pet views which are absolutely limited within the four corners of the earth ; but no sane man, amenable to reasoning, can ever deny the existence of many more worlds than what he is destined to see with his five senses only for a short period of time. If the real man is eternally blissful and omniscient, as we have seen previously, then the opinion of the apparent man of three and a half cubits in length may be safely dispensed with, although the modern civilized man, standing upon the highest rung of the ladder of our dying century, may encourage his extremely narrow and dogmatically sceptic ideas.

The number of such Divine Beings who have graced this earth of ours from time immemorial, is so few that they may be counted on our fingers. They always come to give and tell us something new, and they leave the earth, increasing her intellectual and spiritual wealth a thousand-fold more than what it was previous to their advent. In remote days Buddha came to astound the ruling Brahmanas, who were eating and distributing the chaff of religion, altogether forgetting the sweet and life-giving kernel within, with his redoubtable force of argument, based upon the adamantine rock of pure reasoning, and also succeeded in converting to his views many of them, who were amenable to reason. Later on Jesus came upon the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were solely concerned with the form and not with the spirit of religion. He carried the good message of Love Divine to

all people of all ages, and himself died as a sacrifice to his cause. Then Sankara came to denounce the horrible and abnormal practices of the abjectly downfallen representatives of the once glorious Buddhism, and succeeded in bringing about a better state of society by reinstating the Religion Eternal, accepting Lord Buddha as one of the incarnations of God. Later on Ramanuja came to rectify the absurd customs and spiritless practices of the so-called followers of Sankara, and gave to the people a new form of religion which they could better appreciate and grasp. The great Madhvacharya followed in his wake, to make religion more concrete and easily appreciable and accessible to all classes of people. Later on came Sri Gauranga with his sweet religion of Love, and gave us the key to unlock the most beautiful and sublime life of Sri Krishna, representing all sides of human nature coupled with the superhuman. This grandly Divine personage (Sri Krishna) flourished in remote antiquity many hundreds of years previous to the advent of Lord Buddha, and blessed the mother earth with a religion, which in its broad universality far surpasses all other religions, and which is a true representation of the Religion Eternal, intended for all men at all times. But for Sri Gauranga, the life of this Divine Being would remain a sealed thing to many who find great difficulty in reconciling his apparently contradictory characters. Sri Gauranga's life was a reproduction of some of the grandest phases of the inimitable life of the most glorious of all those divine personages who have blessed this fortunate planet of ours.

From what has already been said, it is clear that these divine personages must experience many supernatural phenomena, and must possess much supernatural knowledge and power, their minds being always directed

beyond the senses, beyond all names and forms. So not limited by their bodies, and thus not confined by time and space, they are sure to be all-permeating in all times and hence eternally omniscient. Their lives have no beginning and no end, because they never identify themselves with their bodies in which they feel that they are dwelling for a time. Therefore since they are eternal, they are still living.

But the question may come, is not every man similarly eternal ? Then what is the speciality of these beings ? The only speciality is that they know they are eternal, whereas the man of the world does not know it, although he is really so. And the difference is vast, one is wise, the other is ignorant ; one is light, and the other is darkness ; and hence one must be the leader or guide, and the other must be led or guided, as the one has eyes and the other is blind.

It is only natural for a man of the world, therefore, to commit all sorts of blunders, if he is vain enough to believe in his own deplorably limited mind. If he does not allow himself to be led by one or the other of these Divine Incarnations, woe is sure to befall him in the meandering paths of this world of misery, where Nature like a siren deceives all passers-by and leads them to destruction at last.

The lives of all those glorious individuals whom the world, of its own accord has had to recognise as nothing less than Divine Incarnations, always present to every reader a series of incidents which are human, strangely interwoven with what is superhuman ; and thoughtless people, who always boast of the superior character of their intellect, hold that all the superhuman incidents are later inventions of the followers of those great men, for according to them, nothing superhuman can ever exist.

After what we have been saying all along, does not this dogmatic assertion on their part sound like that of the frog in the well which held that there could be nothing bigger than his well? Really such people are to be pitied. They do not want to harbour any idea which is more than human, and therefore they do not want to see in these Godmen, anything more than model men who lived, laboured, suffered and enjoyed as all people do, and who preached nothing but how to live in this world happily, how to get the greatest amount of good here with the least amount of labour, forgetting all the while that the lives of these Godmen were the standing protests against the lives lived by men surrounding them, that they drew none of their inspiration from their environments, but that it came from within themselves or from some unmanifested Power, to find fault with all those social and religious practices that were in vogue around them. These hasty people forget that these Incarnations were born to guide and not be guided, and hence their experiences must be of a far superior nature to those of others, to whom many of their actions must appear therefore to be more than human or miraculous. The attempts of those who want to paint such men as nothing better than ordinary men, are as good as to paint the sun, without his glory, to describe beauty without a form to enjoy a piece of music without melody, to relish a dish without taste. As light is inseparably connected with the sun, so the superhuman is inseparably connected with the human in them. Thus if we totally disbelieve in the miraculous portions of their lives, we cannot do so without raising suspicion in the minds of all good and unbiased reasoners regarding our sanity. It should be our duty therefore to present the lives of these Godmen as we find them depicted in our Books, instead of omitting,

altering, twisting and torturing the texts to suit our limited mental capacities. With this preface let us proceed to our subject, and really benefit ourselves by studying the divine character of Bhagavan Sri Krishna, whose Incarnation was solely for the material and spiritual welfare of the earth.

The king in his palace was restless after sending Akrura to bring Rama and Krishna from Brindavana. He was expecting them every moment with feverish excitement. The townspeople on the other hand, were very happy over the coming festival ; they had attired themselves in *gala* dresses, and had formed themselves into little groups "drowning their merry talk in incessant floods of laughter". The whole city of Mathura was very gay, expecting to receive in its bosom ere long the two brightest gems on earth. The stories of the unprecedented personal beauty and prowess of the two brothers had long ago been carried by the breeze of rumour in all directions. Hence Rama and Krishna were not unknown to the citizens of Mathura, who, of their own accord, were decorating their houses and streets to give them a suitable reception, and were every moment expecting their much longed-for arrival. Kamsa also was restless for them, but how different was the anxiety in the heart of the king from that in the hearts of his subjects.

One was ordering the decoration of the arena, selecting the biggest and maddest of elephants, and the most bloodthirsty, ferocious and powerful of wrestlers to meet and ruin the two brothers, with a secret understanding that the latter should never be allowed to escape alive. While the citizens, on the other hand, were beautifying their city, anxious to meet them out of pure love and reverence towards them. One was restless with

pain, while the others were restless with expectant pleasure. These two opposite feelings were not hidden from the all-seeing minds of the two brothers and they were ready for the occasion.

Akrura also revealed to them the full purpose of the demoniacal monarch, for although he was a confidential courtier of Kamsa, still he was a great lover of Sri Krishna whose glory was not hidden from him. When he got down into the Yamuna to take a bath after the two brothers had finished theirs and were comfortably seated upon the chariot, Akrura who had been looking at their beautiful and innocent forms and inwardly admiring them, also saw them in the river when he took his first plunge in it, and not being able to make out how within the twinkling of an eye the two could leave their seats in the chariot and come into the river, he immediately raised his head from the water and directed his eyes towards the chariot only to see in great wonder that they were sitting there as before. He thought it might be an optical delusion and with totally unprejudiced mind he took a second plunge, but the matter was not mended in any way, and he saw before him the two brothers smiling at him in the waters. He again raised up his head from the water and looked towards the chariot only to see them sitting in the same postures as before. He made a third experiment, the result was the same. A fourth, fifth, sixth experiment, and many more experiments afterwards only brought about the same result. Then he naturally concluded that they must be the incarnations of that "eternally glorious Being Who permeates fire, water and all the universe"; and at this thought his heart melted into an intense reverence towards them and spontaneously he sang their glory in this way: "I bow down to Thee, O Thou the abode of

all beings, Who art the cause of even the cause of the universe, Who art the first Being, the eternal One, and from the lotus of Whose navel Brahma, the creator of the universe, has taken his birth."

So Akrura knew them to be the One Infinite Spirit ; disguised in human forms, the most attractive that ever were born of women, only to draw the minds of all men and women of the world, who are always mad after the ever shifting and ephemeral beauties of nature, toward themselves. Infinite we are all indeed, but this idea of ourselves has been totally sealed from our view by the nameless power of Ignorance, which never allows us to go beyond names and forms, and which was totally driven out and discarded by the glorious light of Eternal Knowledge in Rama and Krishna. Although fire is latent in all firewood, mere fuel can never save us from the effect of cold, says Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, but only that fire which is patent can save us from cold and can be of service to us in sundry other ways. Rama and Krishna had their fire patent in them, and hence they could guide all people safely through the dark and meandering paths of the world. Not being confined to their bodies they had the power of illumining the minds of all people. Akrura's mind was illumined by them, and that was the reason why he could see in those young men the all-ruling Spirit of the universe. But could they not similarly illumine the mind of the demoniac king Kamsa ? Was there no other way to save the world from his tyranny than by killing him ? Were they not partial to Akrura in this way ? We cannot say so. The sun shines equally upon all, says Sri Ramakrishna. He does not stint his rays towards a man because he is wicked, and does not pour forth all his glory upon the head of a man because he is saintly. He shines equally

upon the flower and the filth, upon the transparent, as well as the opaque. But the transparent things alone can imbibe and reflect his glory, whereas the opaque ones have no power in them to be illumined. As, on this account, we cannot say the sun to be partial, so we have no reason to lay that blame at the door of Rama and Krishna.

Kamsa was a tyrant. He threw his own aged father into prison and usurped the throne from him. He was an advocate of debauchery, lustfulness, and all sorts of horrible and immoral practices. If any good man dared to stand in his way, he used to get rid of him by at once extirpating him. All good men either ran away from the monster, or were killed by him. He was never in any way conciliatory to his nearest and dearest relatives, if they happened to be good and God-fearing. So most of them avoided him and preferred to live in distant places beyond his reach. Can the world go on with such a demon as its ruler ? And since he was impregnable to all good and godly sentiments, the only way to save the earth from his tyranny was to root him out like a weed that is a bane to the useful vegetation. The father who spares the rod and spoils the child does not do the duty of a father. The government by letting go all the culprits without punishing them, will be no government at all, for ungoverned vices in that case will swallow up society in no time. Hence to protect his children from the hands of the wicked, God must have to come now and then in this world to destroy the latter and protect the former. Without such Divine Incarnations, the world would have been destroyed long ago. Hence the occasional advent of such men is an unavoidable necessity, if God wants to preserve His creation.

And God wants to preserve His creation, for no father wants to see his favourite child murdered before

him by the relentless hand of a lawless ruffian, if he is a father at all and if he has power to save. God never wants to destroy His creation, and as Rama and Krishna were the Incarnations of that God, it was their duty to see all the good men of the land protected, and the evil doers scattered, even as the chaff is scattered by the winds. As long as the two brothers graced our earth, they were entirely engaged in weeding out directly or indirectly the useless and baneful plants from the beautiful garden of creation. So crossing the Yamuna with Akrura, when the buxom, jolly shepherd boys reached Mathura, the memory of Sri Brindavana with all their merry pranks there was totally washed off, for now they directed all their energies to effect the weal of the oppressed. They were at once changed men. They looked around them and found that their dresses and ornaments were not at all in keeping with their environments. So they wanted to change them and then proceed to their task. There was the royal dressmaker's place displaying the gaudiest and best of apparel intended for the use of the royal family, and without much ado they asked the man to let them have suitable dresses. The dignity of the man being thus offended, because he was no less a personage than the great king Kamsa's servant, he wanted to thrash them for their impertinence and then hand them over to police, but like lambs before lions he and all his party lay dead at their feet. They selected their favourite dresses ; Rama attired himself in blue, and Krishna in yellow, and thus enhancing their natural beauty by means of art, they walked through the streets of the city. They saw a hump-backed woman carrying charming garlands and fragrant sandalwood paste for Kamsa, and they asked her to adorn their bodies with them. Charmed with their beauty, the woman, who was naturally kindly

in her disposition although her exterior was totally deformed, at once decorated their beautiful persons with the choicest garlands and so tastefully smeared them with sandalwood paste, that they looked like angels come down from Heaven to see the grand festival that was going to be celebrated on that day in the city. As a reward for her goodness Sri Krishna, with a single touch, transformed her deformity into the choicest beauty.

Was it not partiality on the part of Sri Krishna to kill a dutiful servant, because he did not comply with his unlawful request, and to reward the undutiful maid servant, because she obeyed him? The highest duty of every man is to love goodness and godliness wherever these may be found, and the worst crime which a man can commit is to abet and advocate unrighteousness, ungodliness, perfidy, and inhumanity in others or to perpetrate those evil actions himself. As has been seen, Kamsa was the personification of evil and therefore whoever loves and honours him, loves and honours evil, and being nothing better than evil itself, he should share the same fate with the evil-minded Kamsa. With the exception of a very few low-minded people, none in the city had any love or regard for that monster and all were only praying to God to relieve them from the hand of such a tyrant. As a response to their incessant prayers God had to come down in the form of Sri Krishna to save them. Such was also the case with Kamsa's maid servant, who being naturally good, could never love and regard the demon in her heart of hearts although fear made her outwardly loyal to the tyrant, and she got the reward of her goodness.

Attired in such beautiful dresses, decorated with most beautiful garlands, the brothers attracted naturally the minds of all men and women of the city who could

not take their eyes away from their beautiful persons. They now reached the gate of the arena and as soon as the menials of Kamsa saw them, according to their master's advice, they directed the most ferociously mad elephant, Kuvalayapida, against the two brothers who in no time, put the animal to death. Then came forward the two best of wrestlers Chanura and Mushtika, to meet and wrestle with them, and ultimately to kill them ; but their villainy cost them their lives, for no sooner did they meet the two brothers than they were killed. This enraged Kamsa, and he ordered Nanda, the shepherd father of Rama and Krishna, to be thrown into prison, and Vasudeva, their real father to be killed, and the brothers themselves to be driven away from the city. But Sri Krishna was too quick for him. He sprang upon the dais where Kamsa was sitting upon his throne with his nefarious courtiers, and catching him by his hair, brought him down to the arena and in a moment killed him. The villainous friends of Kamsa, who took arms against the brothers were similarly served, and the all-conquering hero with his brother Rama at that time appeared to his own parents as a boy, to the wicked as an all-ruling and terrible victor, to the wise as the Highest Truth, to the good as the God of the Universe, to the Vrishnis, his own caste people, as their all-comforting, ideal god.

When the tyrant with his party was thus killed, peace was restored in no time. All people became happy and Sri Krishna's first duty was to bring his aged father and mother, Vasudeva and Devaki, as well as the father of the tyrant, Ugrasena, out of the prison. He restored the throne to Ugrasena, because he was far above the petty desire to rule over a kingdom, being above all desires. He bowed down to his real father and mother

Vasudeva and Devaki, who at first could not recognise him and his brother. He told them who they were and their bliss knew no bounds, so much so, that they fell down senseless. Being restored to their senses they embraced their children and bathed them in tears of love. They narrated the cruelty of Kamsa to them and were very happy to hear that the tyrant had been put to death by their own children. All their troubles were ended once for all. The rest of their life they lived very happily with their darlings.

Then came a very sad scene. When the shepherd father and mother of Sri Krishna, Nanda and Yasoda, heard that their darlings were claimed by Vasudeva and Devaki, they were beside themselves with sorrow. When the shepherd boys and girls heard that Sri Krishna was not going back to Sri Brindavana with them, it was worse than a death-blow to them. To return to Gokula without Rama and Krishna was something they could not believe, nay, even imagine. When Sri Krishna himself came and told Nanda, Yasoda and all the shepherd boys and girls, his playmates and companions, all of whom came with him to see the grand festival and present their annual tribute to the tyrant Kamsa, that he could not leave his aged father and mother to go with them to Gokula, it was as if a thunderbolt fell upon their heads. They did not know what to do ; so fondly did they love him and Rama. Sri Krishna tried to console them as much as he could and promised to come back to them after seeing his aged parents, whose eyes had become almost blind with incessant weeping for them in the prison of the tyrant but who were comforted now and happy after many years of uttermost misery. He told them that it was the first duty of every child to bring comfort to his parents, which he had been neglecting by

leading a merry life in Brindavana, altogether unmindful of the extreme agony of his parents whom Kamsa had been torturing with all manner of villainous means. So he could not leave them now on any account. Nanda and Yasoda, who always used to regard him as their darling did not expect such an answer from him, when they wanted him to accompany them to Gokula. They were astounded at the reply. His playmates looked towards him with wistful supplication. They could not talk but only looked at him with eyes blinded with tears. He kissed his parents, he kissed his friends, and told them that ere long he would join them at Gokula, after seeing his parents happy, and the shepherds with vacant minds directed their unwilling steps towards their homes, as if they were going to some foreign land. Vaishnava poets have lavished all their arts in describing this extremely pathetic scene, so much so, that even a heart made of steel will have to melt in the warmth and fervour of their description.

After seeing Nanda, Yasoda, and all the shepherds cross the Yamuna, Rama and Krishna returned to their parents. They made them very happy and lived with them for some months. But they felt ashamed to confess to the Pandits that they had not as yet known a single letter of the alphabet ; so they asked their parents' permission to go to Benares to prosecute their studies there at the feet of a certain sage, named Sandipamuni. Unwillingly the parents consented, and the two went directly to the sage who was very glad to admit them as his disciples. Rama and Krishna, with other Brahmacarinis, lived with and served their Guru, who took particular care of them. They used to go to the neighbouring forest with other boys to bring fuel for cooking and sacrifice ; sometimes they used to go out to beg

rice and other edibles for their teacher and were perfectly pleased with that abstinent life. They were so very intelligent that they were able to learn within six months everything which the sage could teach. When after finishing their studies they wanted to give their teacher some remuneration for his kind care and love towards them, the wife of the sage asked that her dead child might be restored to life and brought back to her from the abode of Death where it had been taken away a year before, for she knew that Rama and Krishna were not ordinary individuals. They fulfilled her request by restoring her own child to her, and with the permission of their teacher they returned to Mathura, versed in all schools of philosophy and the Vedas. Their parents got back their life, as it were, on seeing them.

Kamsa was the son-in-law of the most powerful monarch of the period, Jarasandha, the king of Magadha or Behar. When Kamsa was put to death by Sri Krishna, his two widowed wives, the daughters of Jarasandha, went away to their father's palace, and informed him about the wretched lot to which they had been reduced by Sri Krishna, and wept and entreated him to punish the wicked man, the cause of all their sorrow. Jarasandha, at the head of a vast army, blockaded Mathura, but his army was routed by the limited number of Ugrasena's army, through the commanding skill of Sri Krishna. But Jarasandha was not a man to be put down easily, and so he attacked a second time, but Sri Krishna was again able to repel him with all his forces, nay, he was successful in routing him with all his army in many succeeding attacks, which in all numbered seventeen.

In studying the life of Sri Krishna, we will find that he was never aggressive. He always defended himself

against the aggression of others. He was altogether averse to shedding human blood unnecessarily. He was always for peace at any cost; but when war was inevitable, he taught his adversaries that he was more than a match for them, till of their own accord most of them used to surrender, while the obstinate were sure to be ruined completely. This clearly proves his humane and all-protecting nature. He could feel for all. After killing Kamsa, he lamented for him. For such a soft-natured man war was altogether distasteful, as innumerable men were to be offered as sacrifices to it. So when Jarasandha repeatedly attacked Mathura, he concerted a successful plan to avoid further attacks from that redoubtable enemy. In the hilly island of Dvaraka he ordered a town, as well as a fort to be built. When that was completed, he removed Ugrasena's capital to that place, well protected by the hill fort of Raivataka; but it was not without considerable difficulty, as at that time he was simultaneously attacked on both sides by Jarasandha on the one hand, and on the other hand by Kalayavana, a non-Aryan king who, being a friend to the king of Magadha, was instigated by him to attack the Yadavas at Mathura. Sri Krishna wanted to shed as little blood as possible; moreover he did not like to meet the innumerable forces of the two armies with his limited number of men. So he went alone in disguise into the camp of Kalayavana and stood before the latter, who easily detected him and ran after him to catch him. Sri Krishna was a better runner than the king; so although they went far away from the camp, still the latter could not overtake him, till he entered and hid himself in a cave. The king followed in search of him, and saw a man lying on the floor. He took him to be Sri Krishna and kicked him with his foot. The man

who was a great sage named Muchukunda, thus kicked suddenly, got up and looked at him with eyes burning with anger and at once reduced him to ashes. Sri Krishna came back to Mathura, while the death of Kalayavana so disheartened his army that it left the project of attacking Mathura and returned to its own territory. Then it was not difficult for the Yadavas to meet and rout Jarasandha's troops. When thus the enemies were routed, all the Yadavas, led by Sri Krishna, went to their new city Dvaraka, and there lived peacefully ever afterwards.

After this, proposals for the marriage of Rukmini, the most beautiful daughter of Bhishmaka, king of Vidarbha, were being made. Sri Krishna asked that king for the hand of his daughter. This accomplished lady also had a great love for Sri Krishna. But Bhishmaka, instigated by Jarasandha, did not comply with his request and wanted to give his daughter in marriage to a cousin of Sri Krishna, named Sisupala, who was his inveterate enemy. The day of marriage was settled, and all the kings were invited to it except the Yadavas. So Sri Krishna wanted to take her away by force, because that kind of marriage, which went by the name of Rakshasa Vivaha, was highly esteemed by all Kshatriyas in those days. When on the day of her marriage Rukmini was going home from the temple after performing her worship, Sri Krishna suddenly came up to her and took her upon his chariot. As soon as Bhishmaka and all the royal guests saw this, they came upon him, but he successfully defended himself and his bride against innumerable odds, and at last succeeded in taking her home safely, where they were married in great pomp. The married couple were indeed very happy for they loved each other very ardently.

Naraka, the king of Pragjyotisha, was another wicked king, like Kamsa, who defied all the gods. He was believed to be the son of Mother Earth, and had sixteen thousand daughters. Indra, the king of the gods, once personally came and complained to Sri Krishna against this king, stating that he had stolen the earrings of Aditi, the mother of all the gods. Sri Krishna promised to recover them from the demon. He went and killed Naraka, and married his sixteen thousand daughters, while the Mother Earth herself came with the earring and presented them to the victor, informing him that this Naraka was his own son in one of his previous incarnations, and then she disappeared.

This is a supernatural incident which many people may not believe. It may also have an allegorical meaning which is at once palpable. To be free is the nature of the soul, and hence it is perfectly happy in that state, being in its own natural element. This blissful state goes by the name of heaven. Therefore whatever destroys the liberty of the soul must be regarded as opposite to heaven, *i.e.*, hell or Naraka, and what is that? Desire. It is a fact that desire binds the man to earth. Whence does this desire come? It comes from the contact of the soul with the earth or of Purusha with Prakriti. Sri Krishna killed this desire and converted the innumerable miseries, the off-springs of it, into highest enjoyments, by making them his subservient handmaids or obedient wives. Indra represents the unseen Guru who revealed to him the extent of mischief which this desire is capable of making, so much so, that even gods are not safe from its hands.

After this Sri Krishna killed another demon, who went by the name of Bana. Then he fought against the king of Paundra, named Vāsudeva, a term which, besides

the obvious meaning Vasudeva's son, also means the universe, *i.e.*, God. This king proclaimed that he was the real Vāsudeva or the Incarnation of God, whereas Sri Krishna, the son of Vasudeva, was a nobody. So Sri Krishna challenged him to fight. They met and the latter with all party was killed in the battle.

Yadu was the eldest child of Yayati, but being cursed by the father, he did not succeed him on the throne, which Puru, the younger son, occupied after his father's retirement. Yadu however ruled over some other territories, and his descendants went by the name of the Yadavas. These Yadavas were subdivided into several dynasties, such as, Vrishni, Andhaka, Kukura, Bhoja, etc. Sri Krishna belonged to Vrishni's family, and Kamsa and Devaki belonged to the Bhoja dynasty. Most of the Yadavas were living in Dvaraka ruled by Ugrasena and led by Sri Krishna, who was always kind to his relatives.

Satrajit, a Yadava living in Dvaraka at the time, got a very precious jewel which Sri Krishna suggested to him to present to the king. But lest there should be any misunderstanding amongst his relatives on account of the jewel, Sri Krishna did not press his request too far. Satrajit loved the jewel very much and did not like to lose it, and so, fearing lest Sri Krishna might take it back from him, he gave it to his younger brother Prasena, who, one day going to hunt, was killed by a lion in the forest. In this way the jewel was lost, and Satrajit meanly thought that Sri Krishna must have killed his brother to get the jewel, and spread such a rumour. At this Sri Krishna was sorely troubled. He wanted to relieve himself from the calumny by recovering the jewel, and went to the place where Prasena was killed, and by the blood marks of a lion's paws, he found out the cause

of his death. He also detected the bloody marks of a bear's paws side by side with the lion's at a little distance and concluded that the lion must have been killed by the bear. He followed the footmarks of the bear and was thus led to his den where he fought with him, subdued him, and recovered the jewel from him. Not only that, the bear, who went by the name of Jambavan and who had fought for Rama against Ravana in former days being pleased with Sri Krishna's might and coming to know who he was, offered his beautiful daughter Jambavati in marriage to him. After returning to Dvaraka he gave the jewel to Satrajit, who too gave his most fair-looking daughter Satyabhama in marriage to him. So Sri Krishna married many wives, but, as we have seen, the sixteen thousand daughters of Naraka may be regarded as an allegory.

At this time Drupada, the king of the Punjab, invited all the kings of India to win the hand of his daughter, Draupadi, the paragon of beauty, by showing their skill in archery. All kings flocked from all directions to win the beautiful girl. Duryodhana, the king of the Kauravas, who had usurped the throne from its rightful owner Yudhishtira by sending him away with his four brothers to a distant place to be killed in a nefarious manner, also came with all his relatives and friends desiring the hand of Draupadi. There were with him the best of warriors and statesmen, such as, Bhishma, Drona, Karna and many others. A target in the form of a fish, was placed high up in the air. It could be seen with great difficulty through certain holes made through the intervening barriers and to hit it the archer should look down in a vessel filled with water, placed just beneath to descry the shadow of the target, and thus send forth his arrow with his head downwards. All the kings and warriors failed.

Then Drupada asked the warriors of all castes to try, with the promise that whoever should succeed, he would get his daughter. None rose up, until a young, stalwart and beautiful Brahmana came up to the bow. People hissed at him, taking him to be a madcap, but he succeeded in hitting the mark and winning the fair lady for whom so many kings had assembled. When the Brahmana took the hand of the girl and tried to take her to his home, he was attacked from all sides by the assembled kings. He was more than a match for them, and with the help of another bigger and stouter Brahmana he succeeded in driving away all the kings in no time. Sri Krishna was present on this occasion ; he was merely witnessing, but took no part in the proceedings. When he saw the two strong Brahmanas drive away all the Kshatriya warriors, he at once found out who they were. He concluded that they must be the heroic children of Pandu, whom rumour announced to have been killed by the villainy of Duryodhana. In order to verify his conclusion, he followed the two heroes and saw them join three other fair-looking young Brahmanas. The five together, taking with them the newly won bride, went into a potter's house situated in a village called Ekachakra not very far from Drupada's capital, and presented the bride to an elderly lady, saying, "Mother, we have brought a daughter to you." Sri Krishna's conclusion was confirmed and he appeared before them, kissed and embraced the four and bowed down to Yudhishtira, the eldest brother stating that he was their cousin, Kunti their mother being the sister of his father Vasudeva. It was a very happy meeting. Sri Krishna took leave of them for the night after bowing down to Kunti and Yudhishtira and next day he brought with him enormous wealth and offered it to the Pandavas. In the meantime, Drupada

knew everything about them through his son Dhrishtadyumna, who also had followed them in disguise, and seen and heard what had passed between them and Sri Krishna. So, early in the morning he came and took them to his palace, where in the presence of all the Yadavas headed by Rama and Krishna, the marriage was grandly celebrated. Although Arjuna, the third of the Pandavas, won the bride, still through Kunti's desire the five brothers married her jointly. This was against the custom, but the mother's words were more than a law to them. Moreover in this particular instance, it was sanctioned by the sages, who were the law-makers.

When the blind king Dhritarashtra, the father of Duryodhana and uncle to Yudhishthira, heard that the Pandavas were still living and were married to Draupadi, he with the advice of his pious ministers, such as Bhishma and Vidura, brought about a reconciliation between the Pandavas and his own wretched and abominable children. The Pandavas were given half of the kingdom. They made their capital in a place called Khandavaprastha by the side of a forest which went by the name of Khandavavana. Within a very short time Yudhishthira, with the help of his four heroic brothers became one of the most powerful monarchs of India. They conquered the surrounding territories, and brought enormous riches from all lands, and made their city one of the richest and most beautiful ornaments of the earth. Sri Krishna made the third of the Pandavas, Arjuna, his dearest and most confidential friend and always loved to live and move in his company.

The Pandavas were living very happily in their kingdom. Sri Krishna was staying at Dvaraka. For some reason, Arjuna wanted to make a pilgrimage to all

the holy places of India and he started from Khandava-prastha for that purpose. He saw many holy places, bathed in many holy rivers and lakes. At last he reached Dvaraka where he was received very kindly by his friend Sri Krishna. He was staying there with him for some days and spending his time very happily, when one day he saw a beautiful girl coming from the temple after performing her worship. She was the sister of Sri Krishna, named Subhadra. He was charmed with her beauty, but tried to suppress his feelings. As nothing could be hidden from Sri Krishna, he asked him the reason of his absent-mindedness, and when Arjuna was hesitating to give it out, he of his own accord advised him to take the girl away by force from before all her relatives, when the time of her marriage should come ; for that kind of marrying a lady by force was highly esteemed by all the valiant Kshatriyas of the period. For a brother to advise a stranger to take away his own sister by force seems to us very unnatural and monstrous. But when we consider the standard of morality in those days, when we consider that Arjuna was held in very high estimation by Sri Krishna and that it is the duty of a brother to see his sister married to a great and noble-minded hero, we can never blame Sri Krishna for advising Arjuna in that apparently unseemly manner.

Arjuna followed his friend's advice and, getting permission from Kunti and Yudhishtira through messengers, he took away Subhadra by force before all her relatives during the time of her optional marriage. All Yadavas took arms against him. He, with great dexterity, defended his newly won bride, as well as himself against innumerable odds, and safely escorted her from the battle-field. Sri Krishna, at last, brought about a reconciliation between Arjuna and the Yadavas and

the marriage was formally celebrated with great pomp in Dvaraka.

Arjuna lived very happily for some time there, and at last, taking Sri Krishna and his newly married wife with him, he returned to Khandavaprastha, where Kunti, Yudhishthira and the other Pandavas were anxiously expecting them. The whole city was full of happiness over their presence. Such was the charm of Sri Krishna's personality, such was the amiableness of his character, such glory he used to diffuse wherever he went, such words of wisdom he used to pour forth to all people who used to come to him for advice, such a master of humorous expressions he was, and consequently such a boon and jolly companion he proved himself to be, that whenever he came to a place it was at once invigorated with fresh life, peace and happiness always following in his wake, and whenever he left a place it used to appear like lustreless sun. So was it strange that incessant festival should go on in the noble city of Yudhishthira during his stay?

When one day Sri Krishna and Arjuna were walking by the forest, the God of Fire appeared before them and requested them to help in burning the wood as he was very hungry. He had tried several times previously, but Indra, to whom the forest belonged, had always prevented him from doing so by pouring incessant showers of rain upon him. If they would kindly prevent Indra from doing this then he could appease his otherwise insatiable hunger by eating up the big forest. They took their bows and arrows and told the god to burn the forest. The fire raged terribly on all sides, and all the denizens of the forest began to fly away towards all directions, but Sri Krishna and Arjuna prevented them from doing so with their arrows and offered them as sacrifices to the god. There was a demon whose name-

was Maya also living in that forest. When he saw that fire was coming to swallow him up, he wanted to make his escape, but Arjuna prevented him, and when he came and took refuge at his feet, he was allowed to go wherever he liked. Indra in the meantime seeing that the fire had again encroached upon the territory, began to rain in all direction but Sri Krishna and Arjuna prevented the rains from falling down upon the forest. At this Indra got very much enraged and darted a big hill against the two in order to smash them under it, but they reduced it into powder. Indra tried to hurl his thunder against them, but he was prevented from doing so by an unseen voice, stating that Sri Krishna and Arjuna were the incarnations of two ancient sages, Nara and Narayana, and therefore they should not be served in that way. Indra desisted and became their friend. The hunger of Fire was appeased.

The demon who was saved by the kindness of Arjuna wanted to do some service to him ; Arjuna did not like to be rewarded for doing his duty, and when the former insisted upon doing something, he asked him to do some service to his friend Sri Krishna. So to him he turned expecting an order, and Sri Krishna asked him to build a big court-hall for Yudhishtira, unprecedented in its beauty, grandeur, and richness, as he was the chief architect of the demons. Maya complied with his request and built such a grand court-hall for the pious and holy king Yudhishtira, that its like had never been seen by any man before.

This incident in Sri Krishna's life is also very supernatural, and many people may regard it as nothing better than a grandmother's story. The chief cause of their arriving at such a conclusion is a strong belief in the dull, inert, inanimate and unconscious nature of all matter and

material forces. They do not believe that there is an intelligent Force behind every particle of matter to regulate, guide and keep it in its proper place. But let us see how far their position is tenable. Those people who admit the independent existence of the phenomenal universe commit a great mistake by admitting form, touch, taste, smell and sound to be existing independent of the organism and consequently of the man behind the organism. Their argument is that space and time and consequently the universe contained therein can exist independent of man. If a man dies, does the world die with him ? The world is eternally living for others. But suppose others also die away, where then is the world to remain, the world which is solely made up of forms, touches, tastes, smells and sounds, which can never exist independent of living and conscious human organism to perceive them ? You may still insist that something must exist independent of the organism, the something must be unknown and unknowable ; but the world is known and knowable. Hence independent of the organism the world or universe cannot exist, and we are only concerned with the universe. So the universe is a compound made up of man and not-man, Spirit and Matter, Purusha and Prakriti. As an atom of water is never an atom, but a molecule consisting of one atom of oxygen and two atoms of hydrogen, similarly a particle of the universe is never an indivisible atom, but made up of one atom of matter and one atom of spirit, if we can use such expressions. This clearly proves that the entire universe is permeated with an all-intelligent Spirit, which is therefore all-powerful, as Power and Intelligence always go hand in hand. As the known and knowable universe is resting on Space and Time which is infinite, it is also eternal and infinite, and the all-permeating Spirit must

necessarily be eternal and infinite. This all-intelligent, all-powerful, eternal and infinite Spirit goes by the name of God ; and as an individual man thinks himself to be limited in his physical and intellectual power, small in stature and short in life, he cannot but worship, honour, and always pray to that all-powerful Spirit ; because he is filled with many desires, he wants to get those desires fulfilled, and he naturally and with good reason hopes that if God wills all his desires may be fulfilled in no time. For this reason he wants to please God by worshipping Him, or solely confides himself to His kind care and protection. He realises that the more he loves Him all his cares and anxieties leave him, till at last, knowing Him to be the best of all friends, he directs his whole soul towards Him and thus knows Him to be the nearest and dearest to his heart. He forgets all earthly concerns and floats in the ocean of Bliss Divine and forgets his individuality. He who wants to keep his individuality cannot grasp the infinite nature of God, for how can the finite contain the infinite ? So he worships God in every glorious phenomenon, such as Sun, Moon, Fire, Lightning, Rains, etc., and God, Who is all-permeating and all-powerful, fills the desire of these people by manifesting Himself through these phenomena. Many such incidents we read of in our Upanishads to have taken place. When a man has learned to see God in everything, to him nothing in Nature can be any more dull, dead and inert. Everything appears to him to be living in God. Sri Krishna and Arjuna were such men. They were not like us living in a dull, dead, and material world, so we cannot gauge the extent of their knowledge even if we try. Hence we should not find fault with them if they are concerned with such things, or connected with such incidents, as to us appear supernatural and incredible. Beings like

Sri Krishna, as we have already noticed, are made up of other stuff than what we are made of. So the laws that hold good with us will not hold so with them. Hence we should always reserve our judgments regarding them if we do not want to be rash.

We have already heard about Jarasandha as one of the most powerful monarchs of the period and as an inveterate enemy to Sri Krishna. He was in no way inferior to Kamsa in lawlessness, debauchery, and all sorts of vices. He was so cruel-hearted that desiring to be proclaimed the Emperor of India, he wanted to offer as sacrifice one hundred kings, and for this reason he was already able to procure eighty-six of them whom he kept in prison like so many cattle. Sri Krishna wanted to save the lives of all these kings, but in order to do that, Jarasandha must be put to death. He did not like to shed the blood of others on account of Jarasandha's villainy. So, not wanting to meet him in a battlefield, he took Bhima and Arjuna with him, went directly to Jarasandha half disguised, asked him for a duel, and told him, he could select any one out of the three. Jarasandha preferred Bhima, seeing him to be stouter and stronger than the other two, for he was a good wrestler. So a wrestling match took place the next day and continually lasted for fifteen days, until Jarasandha was killed by Bhima. Sri Krishna placed the young son of the dead monarch upon the vacant throne of his father and thus saved the lives of eighty-six kings and brought peace and purity to the earth.

His next work was to install Yudhishtira, the pattern of all virtues, as the sole Emperor of India, in the presence of all kings. This ceremony goes by the name of the Rajasuya Sacrifice. The four Pandava brothers, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva, at the

head of large armies, went in four different directions to invite the friendly kings and subdue and then invite the unfriendly kings in the coming festival. They succeeded in inviting all the kings of India, and they were all present in Khandavaprasha on the appointed day, with enormous tributes. A grand meeting of the assembled kings and sages took place on the installation day under a spacious pavilion, erected for the purpose, and in that meeting it was proposed to offer a token of especial regard to the wisest and best of men. Yudhishtira, advised by Bhishmacharya, unhesitatingly offered it to Sri Krishna. At this, Sisupala could not suppress his long-standing malice against his former rival. Before all the kings he began to abuse Bhishma and Yudhishtira for selecting such a wretched and unworthy man to represent the wisest and best of men. He wanted to instigate the assembled kings to put a stop to the sacrifice. So Sri Krishna fearing a general commotion that might prevent the inauguration of Yudhishtira, cut the matter short by killing the culprit on the spot and all things went on smoothly afterwards. Yudhishtira was formally proclaimed the Emperor of the whole of India in the presence of all kings. Thus Sri Krishna succeeded in establishing the kingdom of righteousness by making Yudhishtira the Emperor.

At the end of the sacrifice, when all the kings had gone away to their respective territories, Duryodhana with his party went to his own capital of Hastinapura. But the fire of envy, after seeing the enormous wealth of the Pandavas, began to corrode his heart. He planned to ruin Yudhishtira in a very base manner. Sri Krishna had gone to Dvaraka, and a few days after Yudhishtira was invited by Duryodhana to a match at dice. The five brothers, with their wife Draupadi, went to the court of

Dhritarashtra. The match began and Yudhishthira lost everything, one after another, nay, even his four brothers, and worst of all, he lost his own wife Draupadi, who, as soon as her husband lost her, was dragged to the court before the assembled kings and courtiers by the ruffian-like brother of Duryodhana, although her condition at the time was such that no man ought to have gone even near her. The abominable wretch wanted to strip her of her cloth, but she was saved by the miraculous intervention of Sri Krishna, who made her one cloth, with which she was vainly struggling, endless, so that the more the villain drew the cloth away from her body, the more her cloth proved to be endless, till completely foiled in the attempt he sat down exhausted amidst the loud maledictions of all good men.

This miracle bettered the lot of the Pandavas a little and the dice match ended in banishing them with their wife to the forest for thirteen years, the last year of which they should live in perfect disguise, for if, at that time they were detected by any one of Duryodhana's party, they would have to live in the forest for thirteen years more.

Sri Krishna came to them when the Pandavas were living in the forest to console them. The very sight of him dispelled all their gloom. Then he took leave of them and went back to Dvaraka.

Once Duryodhana requested the hot-tempered Durvasa to be a guest of the Pandavas, with his hundreds of disciples after a day of fast. He complied and came to Yudhishthira one midnight with his disciples asking for food. They were saved from the Brahmana's curse by the miraculous intervention of Sri Krishna, who, when they went to wash themselves in a neighbouring brook, after ordering food, so overloaded their stomachs that

Durvasa did not dare meet Yudhishtira and ran away out of the forest.

Sri Krishna came once more to them, when they were staying in the forest of Kamyaka. The Pandavas passed the thirteenth year in such perfect disguise in the court of Virata, the King of Matsyadesa, that none could detect them. At the expiration of the year, after totally routing Duryodhana, who at the head of a vast army, had come to rob Virata of his cattle, the Pandavas revealed themselves. Virata was very much pleased and gave his daughter Uttara in marriage to Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu. Sri Krishna had brought the bridegroom from Dvaraka where he had been staying while his father and uncles were living in the forest. All the Yadavas had also accompanied Sri Krishna on this happy occasion. The news reached the court of Dhritarashtra that the Pandavas had fulfilled their promise. A sudden consternation took possession of the heart of Duryodhana and his party. In the meantime Sri Krishna at the head of all the Yadavas, started for Dvaraka, after advising Yudhishtira to send overtures of peace to the court of Dhritarashtra. He preferred to settle the affairs of the Pandavas and the Kauravas as amicably as possible, not desiring to stain the earth with the blood of her children in unnecessary warfare. Yudhishtira however learned through spies that Duryodhana was not at all for peace, but was collecting forces to give them a sound beating. So he also sent his brothers to different kings requesting their help in the impending war which seemed almost inevitable. Accordingly, Arjuna went to Dvaraka to ask Sri Krishna's help. Duryodhana had taken his seat upon a throne placed near the former's head. Arjuna came in and took his seat near the feet of the leader of the Yadavas, who got up after a little

while and saw Arjuna first and Duryodhana next. So when help was asked by both of them, he wanted to help both. To one party he wanted to become an adviser merely, and the other he offered to help with nine hundred thousands of warriors each one of whom was as good as himself, and he first asked Arjuna to choose one or the other of the two alternatives, as he had seen him first. Arjuna preferred to have him as an adviser, and Duryodhana was perfectly pleased to have the nine lakhs of best warriors and gladly returned home.

Sri Krishna and Arjuna after this came to Yudhishthira at the court of Virata, and at the latter's request, Krishna went to Hastinapura as an ambassador, to try a reconciliation between the two parties. The Divine Ambassador was received kindly by the blind king and his pious ministers, but his wicked son and his evil-minded ministers, such as Karna, Dussasana and Sakuni wanted to imprison him although he was in the capacity of an ambassador. This plot was revealed and Sri Krishna, not deigning to accept Duryodhana's invitation to a dinner at his palace, preferred to go to Vidura's hut and dine there. Although he tried his best to bring about peace, Duryodhana, who did not want to part with even that portion of land that may be taken up by the point of a needle without fighting, was inexorable. So Sri Krishna had to come back to Yudhishthira. On his way, he met Karna and revealed to him the secret of his birth, stating that he was the eldest son of Kunti, born of the Sun-God when she had been a virgin, and if he preferred to come over to the side of the Pandavas, the pious King Yudhishthira and his four heroic brothers would make him the emperor of India, after killing Duryodhana. Karna declined, for although he was a great friend to the wicked king, still he was famous for

his charity and truthfulness. This is called the policy of Bheda or "divide and kill". In India *Sāma*, *Dāna*, *Bheda* and *Danda* are the four policies which were in vogue amongst her politicians. *Sāma* is Peace, *Dāna* is Concession, *Bheda* is Division, and *Danda* is Force. Sri Krishna tried the first three to the best of his power but he did not succeed. We have seen that he never liked to shed human blood unnecessarily. In him heart and brain, feeling and intellect, were wedded together.

He returned to Yudhishtira and conveyed to him the bad news. The two vast armies, composed of all the best warriors of India and numbering about eighteen Akshauhinis, of which eleven were on Duryodhana's side and seven on Yudhishtira's, met in the memorable field of Kurukshetra. On the eve of the battle Arjuna, seeing that he would have to kill his nearest and dearest relatives in the war, got very much dejected, so much so that he determined not to fight and asked Sri Krishna's advice about it. Sri Krishna, who preferred to be the charioteer and adviser of Arjuna, pointed out to him the error, that he was preferring pleasure to duty. The wicked should be killed, if they could not be brought round by any other means, and the cause of the righteous should be supported even at the cost of one's own life. Arjuna had forgotten this golden rule, and that was the reason why he did not want to fight. A man should sacrifice all personal comforts for duty's sake. It was the duty of a Kshatriya to support a righteous cause, and by not wanting to do so he was going to prove himself an undutiful man. Moreover, according to the sages, the man can never be killed, it is the body, the dwelling house of the man, that wears out like a cloth. That is what is called death. The man himself is infinite and perfect, and hence inactive and desireless. Men who

realise that calm and inactive nature of self go by the name of wise men, and the path which they take to realise this goal is called the Path of Wisdom, or *Jnana Marga*. But no man can stay even for a moment without being active. With his food and drink he imbibes activity. Therefore it is not at all easy for him to give up activity all at once, that being his very nature. It is as good to advise him not to breathe, as to ask him to give up his activity. So a man should act without looking at the result, and that can only be done if he can get rid of the idea of "I and mine," that being the cause of all his bondage. But as every man is always actuated by some motive in all his actions, to act without looking at the results is next to an impossibility. Actions, done with motives, breed desires which bind a man ; therefore, if a man wants to get rid of bondage "to work he should have the right, but not to the fruits thereof". It is not a very easy affair, as has just now been seen. So this path, which goes by the name of the Path of Action or *Karma Marga*, is as difficult to be followed as the previous Path of Wisdom.

Man lives by desires alone, and without giving up desires there is no salvation for him, for life is nothing but a slavery to the senses. So a man should practise to die even before his death, that is, he should be dead to all passions and appetites and to all earthly charms. To do that, there is another path, the Path of Yoga, in which he should try to collect and concentrate all his vital energies in the middle of his eyebrows, forgetting all worldly concerns. When no thought agitates his mind, when he forgets that he has a body, when he is conscious of nothing but perfect calmness, at that time he experiences within himself a peculiar kind of intense bliss which transcends the five senses and which can be

grasped only by the clearest intellect. That is what is called the perfection of, Yoga. That is not a very easy affair for the men of the world who cannot even form the idea of giving up the earth, and whose idea of happiness is indissolubly connected with form, touch, taste, smell and sound. Then is there no path for a man of the world to enable him to realise perfection ?

In answer to this Sri Krishna told Arjuna something like this : " Yes, there is a path which is a secret, and because you are a beloved friend of mine, I am going to impart that secret to you. Many are the births that have been passed by Me as well as you ; I know them all, but you know them not. The reason is, I know that I am merely a dweller in the body, whereas you have identified yourself with it ; hence you are confined in it, while I knowing myself to be formless, am perfectly conscious of my infinite nature. Being nameless, and formless, all names and forms are mine. I am the sun, I am the moon, I am all the gods, I am the one God of the universe, I am all-knowing and all-powerful. I am the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the universe. There can be nothing bigger and greater than myself. Although I am doing all things, still I am not the doer, for, being perfect, how can I want to do anything ? I have no want in me. I have no beginning and no end specially or temporally. I am above all time and space. I am one without a second, then who can be greater than myself ? I am pleasure and pain, sweet and sour, good and bad, still I am none of all these. Again, goodness, love, purity, morality and whatever is ennobling and exalting are nearer to me than badness, hatred, impurity and immorality and whatever is ignoble and debasing; for these latter, making a man more sensual, narrow-minded and selfish, take him away from his real and divine

nature, and hence keep him aloof from Me. Whereas the former, making him less sensual and more unselfish, gradually disentangle him from the meshes of body, and at last merge him into Me who am beyond all material concerns. Hence whatever is good, pure and moral is a portion of My own infinite glory. In short I am all whatever you see, nay even beyond that."

Arjuna, his attentive and obedient disciple and friend, asked to be blessed with a vision of his Divine Form, and through his grace was able to see the universe in him. Not being able to bear the intense glory of the sight, he prayed to him to assume his previous form in which beauty and sweetness had been blended together. Sri Krishna complied and became a man again. Then he asked his friend : "Am I not beautiful and all-attractive ? Is it at all difficult for a man or a woman to love me ? And does he or she gain or lose by loving me ? Whoever wants to see me in whatever light, can I not fulfil his or her desire ? Am I not all-powerful ? So the best, easiest, most attractive and most efficacious path is to love me. He who has learned to love me, Arjuna, has learned whatever should be learned, for I am the giver of all knowledge, all bliss and all life. He is the most intelligent and dutiful of all men, who has given up all other duties to love me, who has surrendered himself entirely at my feet, for I will save him from all miseries. This is the path of love, intended for the saint and sinner, the wise and unwise alike. This is the path for all to realise perfection which is my own Self. So fight without any scruple, fight not for yourself but for me who am righteousness itself."

Arjuna fought, and with the help of Sri Krishna's sage advise and the mettle of his heroic brothers, won the great battle of Kurukshetra, where evil was sacrificed at

the altar of good. With the death of Duryodhana, the incarnation of evil, righteousness was again brought into prominence, the world got back its long-lost peace, the wicked people had to seek out the nooks and corners of forests and mountain caves, the good were no longer in fear of tyranny of evil doers, the whole aspect of nature assumed a beautiful form, and joy flowed forth from the hearts of every living being in the earth, air and water. Sri Krishna felt that his task was done ; and his next duty was to place Yudhishthira, the pure, on the throne of India.

But that saintly man, after the victory, was so much overpowered with compunction for the loss of all his kinsmen and friends who had been the greatest and most warlike men of India, that the very idea of sitting upon the throne after having shed so much noble blood he could not entertain and he requested Sri Krishna, his four younger brothers, the sage Vyasa his grandfather, and many other sages and Brahmanas who had come to request him to be formally inaugurated as the emperor of India, to allow him to lead a secluded life in some solitary corner of a forest in the hills. After a good deal of remonstrance he was at last prevailed upon to sit upon the throne by his advisers who had showed many clear and undeniable reasons based upon the authority of the Scriptures.

Thus Sri Krishna, the king-maker, made Yudhishthira the emperor of all India and established the empire of righteousness, where peace, prosperity and happiness thrived in abundance under his benign influence. India was saved from the tyrannical rule of the wicked, and placed under the care of the mildest and holiest of men, the incarnation of purity, Yudhishthira, the bare mention of whose name purifies a man.

The day after the inauguration Yudhishtira got up from his bed early in the morning, and having said his prayers, his first duty was to go to the place in which Sri Krishna had been sleeping to enquire whether he had rested well, and offer his worship to him. He saw him sitting upright on his bed, deeply meditating, and waited for his coming back to the plane of his senses. When after some time Sri Krishna opened his eyes, Yudhishtira wanted to know from him what absorbed his mind so much if it was not a secret. At this his loving friend and guide replied, "I have been all this while with Bhishma in the battlefield. The great and sage-like hero has been meditating upon me on his bed of arrows with a whole-souled devotion, and so I had to go to him. The time is approaching when Bhishma, the man of terrible vow, will leave this earth, making her really poor as regards the highest wisdom, the greatest herosim, the most profound learning, the most absolute purity of thought and deed, and the most unparalleled abstinence. Mother Earth will have to lose in him her brightest ornament in a very few days. The great son of Santanu is waiting for the sun to take up his northern course from the Tropic of Capricorn, as that time, when light preponderates over darkness is considered very auspicious by all the holy men who want to give up their bodies, desiring the most exalted condition of final emancipation. He will still protract his unbearable life for fifty-six days more, lying at full length on the sharp ends of shining arrows piercing every inch of his body, one of which is more than enough to kill the strongest and most hardy warrior, as death can never approach Bhishma unless he wills it. So, my beloved, seize this rarest opportunity of learning from him all that is worthy to be learned, clear all your doubts, and get rid the dejected condition of

your mind which has upset you so much. Let us all go to him now and sit at his feet to learn and continue going till the last day of his stay with us here."

Thus addressed by his greatest friend and adviser, Yudhishtira's heart filled with gratitude to Sri Krishna and he at once replied : " Thou all-knowing consoler of all the souls in the universe, what can be more desirable than this ? How fortunate is our great-grandfather that he will have the much longed-for sight of thee, to whom he is so much devoted, during the last days of his unequalled and inimitable life ! Blessed is the son of Ganga, blessed are we, too, in having such a friendly saviour as thy supreme self, one without a second." So saying he at once ordered all the chariots to be brought which would take them to the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Sri Krishna and the five sons of Pandu, headed by Yudhishtira, then got into their respective chariots followed by a large retinue of the surviving warriors and tributary kings, and reached their destination in a short time. They left their chariots at a distance and walked solemnly in silence towards the tent of Bhishma, passing through horrible sights of putrifying and unsightly dead bodies, severed heads and limbs of warriors preyed upon by all sort of grim vultures and ravens. Approaching the side of Bhishma, Sri Krishna, the leader of the party, accosted him with these words : " Noble son of Ganga, do you preserve your mental equanimity on this bed of arrows piercing the most vital parts of your body ? None but you, O Bhishma ! can bear this intolerable pain even for a moment and you are calmly continuing your life in this manner awaiting the return of the sun towards the north which still requires fifty-six days more ! The Pandavas have come to offer their worship to you. They want to learn of you the duties of kings, and the four

stages of life, and many other things to clear their doubts and illumine themselves, as with your life will end all purity, knowledge and wisdom. How do you feel ? ”

Bhishma seemed enlivened by these sweet words of him who was the only one Lord of his heart, which was filled up with infinite bliss at the sight of Sri Krishna, and tears of joy began to trickle down from his eyes. He said: “ Hail, consoler of my Soul, thy charming voice can bring back life to the dead ! How have I been longing to be blessed with a sight of thy sweet self ! The flesh is paining unbearably, the arrows are finding their way into the very seat of my vitality, the tongue is parched with intense thirst, the whole body is burning as if with fire, my brain is reeling, and I have no command over my thoughts. It is not possible for me to talk even for a few minutes.” At this Sri Krishna said : “ May you be blessed even at this moment with clearness of mind, may your memory come back to you with all its brightness, may all the pains of your body disappear at once, may you have peace and bliss within yourself, and may this state continue till you attain your final emancipation.” The moment Sri Krishna uttered these words, Bhishma was free from all his pains, and he said : “ How happy I feel now, Sri Krishna, made so by you ! Such is thy infinite love towards thy servants. Thou wantest me, an insignificant servant of thine, to teach the sons of Pandu, O thou all-knowing lord of the entire creation ! Who am I before thee ? Even the firefly is something before the sun, but I am not even that before thee. Do teach them thyself. What do I know ? What can I teach ? ” At this Sri Krishna said : “ If the full moon is charmingly sweet and refreshing, it is but natural for it, it cannot but be that, it has no special merit for this. So, if I the Omniscient One, the Lord of all, speak words

of Wisdom, that is not at all wonderful, but if out of the mouth of a man come words of illumination that dispel ignorance from those who desire to know the truth, then it is really wonderful! I want to make you my mouth-piece. May all the glory be yours, my dearest devotee, and remember my words that as long as this world will last, so long the teachings which you are going to impart to the Pandavas will continue to be the guiding star of all humanity." Bhishma, hearing this, said : " Lord as thou commandest, so thy servant is ever willing to do. I am a tool in thy hands. Direct me as thou willest. I am ready to teach them. Come, my boys, come near me, and ask me what you want to know." At this, the Pandavas, headed by Yudhishthira, prostrated before him, and Sri Krishna said : " The eldest of the Pandavas is pierced with great compunction remembering that he had to kill all the best men of the land in order to get back his throne. This thought weighs so heavily upon him that out of sheer compunction he feels greatly ashamed to make his appearance before you. Console him with sweet and encouraging words, dispel his gloom, so that he may not think that he has done an undutiful act by doing the duty of a Kshatriya."

At this, Bhishma called Yudhishthira to his side and told him : " My dear boy, I know you from your boyhood to be perfectly pure, wise, charitable and loving even towards your enemy. How can anything bad be done by you ? You are, moreover, always guided by the Supreme Being in his human incarnation, whom you regard as your greatest friend on earth ; how can you, my beloved children, ever do anything wrong ? So be not scared by an imaginary evil which has no existence whatever. Go, my boy, rule the empire with righteousness, showering peace and bliss all over the land." Thus

consoled, Yudhishtira touched the holy feet of his great-grandfather with all his brothers and bowed down his head in obedience. Sri Krishna then said : "Bhishma, we shall all be regularly coming to you every day to learn of those truths which you only can give out and none else. To-day we leave you with these sages that never leave your side either in weal or in woe, and in whose company you always find that consolation which pure and saintly persons alone can ever expect to have. May all glory, peace and bliss be yours." So saying, Sri Krishna with the Pandavas and their retinue came back to Hastinapura. Thereafter for fifty-six days the same party continued going and listening to the invaluable instructions of Bhishma, who at the end of that period attained salvation and recovered his lost glory in Heaven as the greatest of the eight Vasus, after having explained to the perfect satisfaction of Yudhishtira and all others the various duties of humanity in all stations of life.

Yudhishtira now was on the pinnacle of his glory, surrounded by Sri Krishna and his four unconquerable brothers. He ruled his empire with so much ability and love for all his subjects that in a few days peace was restored everywhere. There was no famine or untimely death. Everywhere the lands yielded the richest of crops, the most beautiful and sweet smelling flowers, and the most luscious and juicy fruits. The climate everywhere became very pleasant and salubrious. Timely showers of refreshing rain clothed the earth with the most abundant vegetation, and the whole land attired itself in the most gaudy dress as if to show that its rightful owner had come to take charge of her.

Thus it went on for a few days, then again the gloom returned to the mind of Yudhishtira and made him very

miserable. As he sat on the imperial throne he was again sorely troubled within himself when he remembered the amount of bloodshed which he had to cause in order to get that towering sovereignty. Being naturally very soft-hearted, he could not think it proper on his part to enjoy all the regal luxuries which had been so dearly bought with the noblest blood of the land, and once more he wanted to retire to the forest and lead a secluded life as an ascetic. Then Sri Krishna sweetly pointed out to him his fallacy by telling him : " There are two kinds of diseases, O king, physical and mental. When the body is affected with undue heat or cold then physical disease sets in and troubles the man so long as the abnormality is not toned down. Mind, on the other hand, is subject to three kinds of dispositions, pleasurable, painful, and dull. When a man is over-much happy, miserable or dull, then he suffers from mental disease the cure of which lies in toning down the sentiments to their normal nature by bringing their opposites before the mind, as undue happiness can be toned down by remembering that happiness is ever followed by misery and so on. In curing the mental diseases the man must himself have to try, he cannot get any help from external sources. No friend can help him out of it. You have forgotten that you have only done the duty of a Kshatriya by destroying the wicked and all those who helped them. That is the reason why you are falsely troubling yourself with the idea of your sinfulness. Before, with the help of your heroic brothers and other kings, you fought with and defeated Bhishma and Drona, but now you will have to fight your own battle, by your own mental strength. Friends, servants or weapons will avail you nothing in this struggle ; you must have to win the battle yourself. Be not led away by your false imagination.

"I can point out another remedy to you that will eradicate this mental gloom, which every now and then comes to trouble you. Already Vyasa advised you to perform the Asvamedha Sacrifice, and I also ask you to do the same, as there is no greater purifying agency for a king than this exalting ministration to all the gods, as well as the Supreme Lord of the whole universe." Yudhishtira kept this injunction of his friend and Guru in his mind.

The sweet and instructive words of Sri Krishna restored peace in his heart and he began to rule the world with his brothers thereafter as a loving father rules the happy household, sitting upon the imperial throne of Hastinapura.

When peace was thus restored throughout the whole of the Empire, Sri Krishna and Arjuna took several pleasure trips to many of the holy places and solitary hills with swift-flowing streamlets adorned with picturesque trees on both sides. They spent their time in friendly conversation and various other amusements. At last they arrived at Khandavaprastha and lived for sometime in the unrivalled court-hall of the former capital of Yudhishtira, built by Maya. There one day Arjuna asked Sri Krishna to repeat to him all those divine instructions which he had imparted to him on the eve of the great battle of Kurukshetra, as he had forgotten most of those teachings. At this his friend lovingly reproved him a little for his holding them so lightly, as he had not given proper attention to what should have been the most important thing for his serious consideration. He told Arjuna that he could not now repeat them to him, as they had been revealed to him in a certain exalted state of divine communion. But he would try his best to illumine him by discoursing upon

a kindred subject to which he should pay particular attention if he wanted to save himself from the miseries of repeated births and deaths.

This discourse goes by the name of Anugita or a sequel to the Gita, in which he reproduced to him all those godly and saving instructions which once a divine Brahmana had imparted to him. Then he told him the allegory of a Brahmana and his wife. In the course of that figurative story, he narrated a beautiful incident of one ancient king, Alarka who, after conquering the whole of the earth, fortunately found out that one powerful being still held his powers very lightly, and that was his mind which continued to lord it over him. So he wanted to bring it under his control, and thought, "Through my incessant success, my mind has become very much puffed up. Thus it has become restless, and does not obey me at all. If I can conquer this mind then I shall be really a conqueror, so let me direct all my sharp-edged weapons against it." Thinking thus, the king pointed an arrow against his mind, at which the latter told him, "All such weapons, Alarka, cannot hurt me in any way, rather they will pierce your own vital parts and kill you. You rather try to find out some other kind of weapons with which you may subdue me." Then the king directed the arrow towards the nose, as he thought, "This nose smells many fragrant things and then creates in me eternal desires to smell them again, and thus makes me a life-long slave to desires, so I must get rid of it." Then the nose told him the same words as the mind had said to him. So he directed his arrow against the tongue, thinking, "This tongue tasting sweet things, always longs after them and as its hunger is insatiable, I must kill it." At this, the tongue told him the same words as the nose. Then he directed his

shining arrow against the skin on similar pleas, at which it also replied to him like its predecessors. Then the ears and the eyes were about to be similarly served, but they put a stop to his project as their comrades had done. Then Alarka thought, "I must destroy this evil counsellor, Buddhi or determinative faculty, which like a false friend, always advises me wrongly." Buddhi also told him what the mind and others had told, and then Alarka finding his steel weapons useless, began to find out that weapon which would give him dominion over all his senses. He began to search for it within himself, since no earthly weapon could kill them. The more he was thus self-centred, the more he found himself to be gaining mastery over the mind, and then it occurred to him that Yoga or mental concentration was the only weapon which could give him complete mastery over the mind and senses. Thus knowing, within a very short time he was able to conquer all his senses with the sharp-pointed and well-aimed weapon of Yoga, and attained the highest perfection at last. Wondering at his success, he sang this sweet song : "O how foolishly we employ the greatest portion of our lives in searching after the fulfilment of our sensual appetites, going out of ourselves. Now I have found out, there is nothing like being self-centred, if a man wants real happiness."

When this long allegory ended, Arjuna asked his friend who the Brahmana and his wife were, to which Sri Krishna replied : "My mind is the Brahmana, and my Buddhi the wife ; and I myself am Krishna, the all-knowing God."

Then Sri Krishna brought in another allegory about a certain Guru and his disciple, replete with abstruse Vedantic Truths expressed in the most concrete form and thus made the truth easy of comprehension even for

the ordinary mind, and when Arjuna asked who the Guru and the disciple were, the poet-philosopher replied, "I am the Guru and my mind is the disciple."

After spending sometime in Khandavaprastha Sri Krishna wanted to go back to his own territory, and so he and Arjuna came to Hastinapura to ask permission of Yudhishthira. The king unwillingly consented, or who would like to be separated from such a friend? So Sri Krishna, accompanied by Satyaki, his ardent admirer and attendant, started for Dvaraka. On his way he met and worshipped in the deserts the great sage Utanka who almost always remained within himself, and therefore did not know what had been going on in the external world. He had been a friend of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. He also knew that Sri Krishna had gone to bring about a reconciliation between the two quarrelling cousins, and he had a great faith in the divine power of the son of Vasudeva. So, as soon as he saw him, he asked whether peace had been restored between the two parties and when the latter told of the entire dissolution of almost all the best kings and warriors of India his anger knew no bounds, so much so, that he wanted to curse Sri Krishna for neglecting to bring about the much-desired peace, as that would have saved the lives of so many of the best children of India. At this Sri Krishna asked him to forbear for a while, until he narrated the real state of affairs, and convinced the sage that the peace could not, nay, should not have been brought about as the harmful plants had to be weeded out of the earth so that the good ones might thrive and prosper. Utanka was himself again, and then knew that Sri Krishna was the incarnation of God and asked him to show to him his universal form, and the latter, being pleased with him, showed him the same form which he had shown to Arjuna.

Sri Krishna, after this, went to Dvaraka and there lived with his parents, relatives, family and friends for sometime, dispelling all their sorrows and griefs. Dvaraka became the scene of incessant festivals. Thus it continued for some months when one day a messenger from Hastinapura brought the news that Yudhishtira was going to celebrate the Asvamedha sacrifice, and most eagerly wanted the company of all the Yadavas headed by Rama and Krishna, on that important and holy occasion. As soon as the news came from the messenger, it spread like wild fire throughout the whole of Dvaraka, and grand preparations were set on foot by all the Yadavas to go to the capital of Yudhishtira. With the exception of the old and the disabled, all marched towards Hastinapura, till, on an auspicious day, the gala party reached its destination amidst loud acclamations of intense joy proceeding from an immense multitude headed by Yudhishtira who had been anxiously waiting for them.

The party entered the most beautiful of all cities amidst showers of sweet-scented flowers, smeared with the sandalwood paste, falling from the soft, delicate and lily white hands of young and fair-looking damsels, whose restlessly joyful eyes began to feast upon the full-blown beauty of Sri Krishna, after paying him the charming tribute of loving smiles playing upon their sweetly ruddy lips. All the streets had been sprinkled over with perfumed waters and strewn with fragrant flowers. The smell of burning incense had sweetened the whole atmosphere. Temporary gates of green foliage had been erected in several places where musicians were playing and singing some charming melodies. Sri Krishna, with all his retinue, entered the city amidst such fascinating environments. His advent increased the splendour of

the festival a thousandfold, and the earth far superseded Heaven, the dominion of Indra, in having for her lord, the lord of the whole universe.

The other four Pandavas were not present, as they had gone to subdue the surrounding territories. As soon as Sri Krishna arrived, Uttara, the wife of Abhimanyu, gave birth to a dead child. He gave it life and thus showered bliss over the sorrowing members of the royal family. Shortly after the four Pandavas came from four different directions, bringing with them enormous wealth from the conquered territories, and when they saw Sri Krishna and heard that he had given life to their only descendant, their joy knew no bounds.

The sacrifice was performed in the grandest and best manner possible. Yudhishtira, the incarnation of righteousness, was now in the highest pinnacle of his glory whither he had been raised through the irresistible will of the Lord of the whole universe, Bhagavan Sri Krishna. After this, the two divine brothers went back to Dvaraka to shower peace and blessing there for many days to come. Let us leave them here in their sweetest and most benign aspect.

He, the soul of the entire cosmos, the Divine Sri Krishna has given us the best and most universal religion. He has brought out and popularised the grand truths of the Upanishads in such an easy and attractive manner, that all men at the present time recognise the greatness and universal sympathy of his all-embracing heart. He could equally feel for all, a saint as well as a sinner. He is the best exponent of the Religion Eternal, whose infinitely broad nature he has so clearly brought out that it will always stand unparalleled amongst all the religions of the world. Can we be too grateful to him ? Blessed indeed is that man who has learned to worship

him with the flowers of faith, regard and love, for he has not only made himself one of the happiest individuals here but has earned and kept in store for himself eternal happiness hereafter. May the blessings of Sri Krishna alight upon all of us on this auspicious day of his nativity, and enable us to love him. May He accept us as His children. May we regard Him as the only support of our life, through His infinite grace and loving kindness. May peace and bliss be showered upon us from His unstinting and all-bestowing hands of Infinite Love.

By Jayadev

